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THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW

SEPTEMBER 1987
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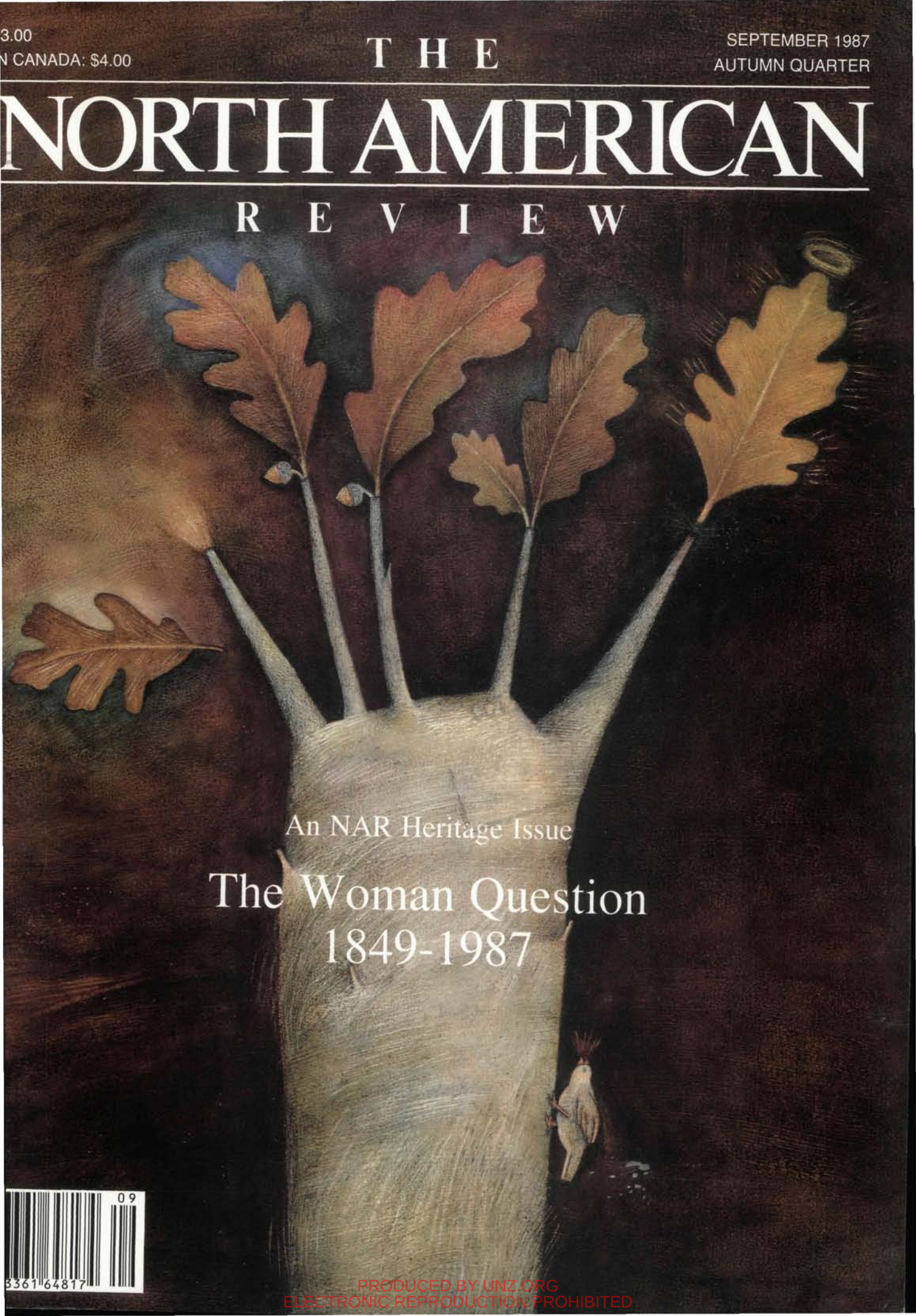

An NAR Heritage Issue

The Woman Question 1849-1987

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Three months ago we set out with the help of a knowledgeable guest editor to put together a 48-page supplement to this magazine, outlining attitudes toward women as reflected in the NAR's pages as far back as the mid-nineteenth century. Our intentions have been of the best, and they have run away with this special Heritage issue; what you have before you is the largest NAR in recent history (tied only by our Heritage number dealing with The Indian Question, published in the winter of 1972-73), with more than 65 pages of supplement in addition to most of our usual features and departments. We will say nothing of the women's material typeset but crowded out by economics; we will say less than nothing about the hundreds of pages of NAR essays and reviews, opinions and biases, which rest unXeroxed and untapped on the library shelves, waiting to be researched by some future historian of gender. It is enough for us to remark that the old arguments for and against the equality of women have the ring of new arguments for and against ERA and other contentious current topics—and to say our gratitudes to guest editor Carolyn Hardesty for her compilation and her summary essay on page 89.

We're happy to welcome Scott Russell Sanders back to his usual place (The Present Case, page 104) after his year of research and writing at MIT. December will see the return of David Hellerstein to the same column. Other familiar essayists in this September issue included Erin McGraw, Hollis Giammatteo, and Michael Martone, who has recently settled in for a year at Harvard. And we are of course delighted to have Ivan Illich in our pages with his serious discussion of literacy in a perhaps post-literate world.

Books of interest to NAR readers: Stephen Dixon's *Garbage*, a novel, has been published by Cane Hill Press (225 Varick Street, 11th Floor, New York 10014); Madison Smartt Bell's story on page 93 is from a new collection, *The Year of Silence*, just published by Ticknor & Fields; David Bottoms' new book of poetry is *Under the Vulture-Tree*, from Morrow; Gary Gildner's newest is a novel, *The Second Bridge*, from Algonquin; Steve Barthelme's *And He Tells the Little Horse the Whole Story*, a collection of stories, has been published by Johns Hopkins.

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THE
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Why the Windmill?

MICHAEL MARTONE

What does that windmill mean? It is over Grant Wood's left shoulder in one of his self-portraits. Beyond, in arcs of green, is the sine curve of landscape, the equation Wood laid over Eastern Iowa, his signature. The horizon, almost halfway up the picture, cuts behind the artist at mouth level, informing the shape of his lips and, by extension, suggesting the look of the Midwestern face. That Gothic stare is an imprint of the land looking back. I don't know. That same horizon goes on to intersect the windmill tower at the second tier. The windmill introduces a new category. The windmill bleeds off the edge of the picture. The image becomes abstract lines and x's. Towers are narrower at the top. All the lines conspire to create another symmetry, a vanishing point somewhere in the brown clouds, but end in an eight-petaled, half sweep of the wheel, the vane forking back to the artist's massive brow, the staring eyes behind the round glasses. Every hair on the artist's head is rendered, but the windmill, in the middle distance, is smoky, gestural. An illusion is created as the tower climbs. The windmill seems to project from the broad field of the artist's forehead, a thought. But what thought?

A friend who grew up on a farm told me she was warned repeatedly when she was a child not to climb the windmill. The result, of course, is that she couldn't wait to try it. Think about children who grew up on farms when farms had windmills. I imagine them looking out over the fields by looking through the slowly cranking blades of the windmill. There is nothing moving, but the strobing blades could be the frames of film slightly out of synch, a home movie where no one moves, but the picture flickers. There is the wind, sure. When I first moved here I was told that there was nothing to slow it down after it came howling from the Rockies. And the wind made the country perfect for the mills, before electricity, to pump water from the wells for the house, the barn. The tiny platform at the top of the windmill often was the highest point on the farm. Perhaps it is the only vantage point from which to see the farm. Today airplanes are flying over all the time taking pictures. Salesmen show up later at the farms with glossies to sell. They point out to the farmers how they have gotten the angle right to hide the trash pit behind the stand of trees. Often you can't tell the order of the land until you take to the air. There, maybe, it all makes sense, lines look straight and rows neat and clean. Or maybe you can see for the first time over that last hill to the county road and beyond. At that moment your parents are turning off the blacktop onto the dirt lane heading home.

In Grant Wood's painting of Herbert Hoover's birthplace, the perspective is that of the windmill. You are on the platform looking down. And it isn't just that painting. Often he lifts you up above the farms and

fields so he can put those wrinkles in a wide flat sweep of ground. And it isn't just Grant Wood who is climbing. And it's not just windmills being climbed. There are the silos, the elevators on the railway sidings, and the water towers in towns. It would not be the Midwest if there weren't this iconography of the horizontal lines punctuated by a few rickety stabs at the sky. When the ground is everywhere it is thrilling to float for a moment above it, to see how truly it spreads out, suspended between the land and the mirroring flat-bottomed clouds. Iowa, after all, is not simply the "corn state." It is the "*tall* corn state."

What does the windmill mean there over the left shoulder of the television news reader? Often when the nightly broadcast turns to the chronic crisis on the farm, a windmill appears hovering in the chromakey blue sky behind the talking head. Sometimes it is part of a farm silhouette—barn and silo and bloom of windmill. Seconds count in this business. The image is shorthand. You see the windmill and you know to think *farm*. Perhaps you begin to hear its crippled creaking in a hot wind, the skeleton of the vane swinging and flapping. The grass has been growing up the buckling tower and from the road as you roar by, for a second, it looks as if the weeds and vines are pulling the whole mess down. There is no one left on the place to take care of it. The tone has been set. A few seconds, maybe a minute, is doled out about "the farm." The windmill is wiped from the screen leaving that electric blue sky, the segue to the next graphic.

It is not only that the windmill is a vertical structure in a horizontal setting which makes it such a powerful and useful image. Nor is it simply its kinetic nature, though that is part of it. The emotional punch to watching a steam locomotive is the animation of the driving rods and pistons, the billowing smoke and steam. It moves as it moves. I've seen people weep at the sight of it. So too does the working windmill wind and pivot. Standing out above the oasis of the farmstead, the windmill blades flash and tumble. From a distance, with the tower invisible, the spinning disk seems to provide its own lift, its own gravity, a tiny silver satellite at the

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zenith above the barn. The movement catches the eye. This country is not only wide but still. I'll say it again. The only thing moving is the wind. It is seen only in its effect as it turns the blades. The windmill moving makes the invisible visible.

What interests me is the transubstantiation when an object such as a windmill crosses over to the realm of the abstract. It is no longer just standing out in a field pumping water. It begins to stand for something else. The vines of meaning and metaphor overgrow and encase the object, a kind of topiary, and then replace it altogether.

There are not that many windmills left in Iowa. As farms have been absorbed to form larger farms, as the farmsteads were torn down, what windmills remained after electrification came down too. They were attractive nuisances after all. They are hard to maintain. There are fewer ruins of windmills too. My friend who climbed the windmills told me that old windmills were often left standing because it was so hard to fill up the well. There is so much emptiness. First, there is the deep shaft down to the sinking water table. All the water taken out. All the digging. Spoil everywhere. And now nothing is left in the neighborhood to fill it back up, not even trash to hide from the aerial eye. A big hole in the middle of a field. Sometimes I can still see the precinct of a vanished farmyard marked by rhubarb or scraggly forsythia, a pile of brush, a gap in the fence and a rusting tower, a sapling gushing up from the well. But even these sites are disappearing. This spring there was a ruckus when a renter plowed through an old graveyard of a county care facility. The plot was restored but no one had remembered that it was there in the first place. The farmer didn't even see it until he turned up a small stone. So it is with these old places. For a while you could tell how things had been. Windmills were often set up in fence rows. Chances are good if you see a lone tower in a field, that field was subdivided once. A fence, a smaller field leads to other landscapes—animals on pasture, fallow grass, oats or orchard. As each year goes by, as the Midwest empties itself of people, it becomes harder to imagine. And then in one day it is all gone. We've barely scratched the surface.

And yet the windmill hangs on in the imagination.

I came upon this book in the library. *A Field Guide to American Windmills* was written by T. Lindsay Baker and published by University of Oklahoma Press in 1985. The first one-hundred pages of the book are devoted to the history of the windmill in this country. It is a story of 19th-century practical engineering and optimism. Two big problems needed to be solved in order to pump water for people, livestock, and steam engines. The first had to do with making the mill self-regulating, a way to shut itself off before the wind of the plains ripped up the pumping machinery. The wheel would spin out of control. This was solved in various ways through configurations of vanes and weights and springs. Perhaps the most startling innovation was employed on the early wooden models. As the wind blows harder, sections of the wheel give way like trap doors. The solid wheel turns into a rotating cylinder and, as the sections pivot out of the wind, the wheel slows. Often on the more familiar and newer metal windmills, the vane is made to always swing into the wind. The wheel, with the aid of springs or weights, sets at an angle to the vane depending on the wind speed. The second problem had to do with maintenance. The invention of the oil reservoir to bathe the machinery silenced for longer, livable periods the windmill's squeaking.

The book is also a history of a technology. Such histories are always interesting because they record the industry, the energy of people and money spent on an enterprise that seems today to be completely irrelevant. It is a season of a paradigm brought to an end by cheap electricity. Such histories always allow me to daydream about the disappearance of other technologies—say computers or rifles—that seem now to be irreplaceable. Reading the histories of machines makes you imagine the world without that machine at the same time you must imagine something new to take its place.

The world of windmills is gone or almost gone. The 500 remaining pages in the book are devoted to just what the title says: a field guide. There are silhouette drawings of hundreds of windmills. Occasionally next to the large drawing there is an alternate detail, a subspecies—a vane with a colored edging or shape. The Star Model 12 had either a bold star or a stenciled *Kendallville Ind* on the sheet metal. There is a text with particulars—history and range, identifying marks, and remarks on governing and oiling. On the facing page is a photo, often taken by the author, of an example in the field. Some pictures show the windmills in a state of decay, but many have been restored or are working, especially in the Southwest where the size of the grazing ranges still makes it impractical to electrify the pumps. The names are wonderful: Daisy, Dandy, OK, Peerless, Snow (all made by the Challenge Company), Ideal, Zephyr, Maud S, Easy, Hummer, Tip Top, Whizz, Hoosier, Climax, Bright, Swift, New Era, Defender, Steel Toledo, Running in Oil Giant, Yankee, Ben Franklin, Globe, Umbrella, Swords and Surprise. They were named for the manufacturers, for places, descriptive names. Still, in the appendix there are thousands more without names or even model numbers. These are simply listed as unidentified.

I took the book with me on a trip into the country this spring. I traveled a favorite road, E-66, which cuts south and west off US 30, hugging the northern crest of the Iowa River valley. The road leads to Belle Plaine, and it is a beautiful broad plain with the green belt of the river appearing suddenly by the road then meandering far away to the south. The farms are all scattered along the hill ridge looking out on the bottom land and the fields. Someone who lived around here once made elaborate trellises for the barns and sheds. I saw several windmills but they were all Aermotors, models from the '40s and '50s. Aermotors are the sparrows of windmills. The chances are every other windmill you see in the wild is an Aermotor. On the vane is a swooshing metal brace similar to the device Nike puts on its running shoes. The word *Aermotor* is printed to look as if it undulates, giving the sheet metal a fluidity. They still are made, until recently only in Argentina where a licensee sold the home company the parts, but now again from a plant in Conway, Arkansas. According to "Harness the Wind," the catalogue of the O'Brock Windmill Distributors of North Benton, Ohio, a six foot Aermotor with tower and pumping hardware would cost a

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No Wild, No Wildlife.

Tim W. Clark

Life in the wild can be pretty tough these days. Without the necessary habitat to live in, some species like the Black-Footed Ferret are severely threatened. Due to poisoning programs designed to control "pests" and developments that destroy its habitat the Black-Footed Ferret is on the brink of extinction.

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little over $2,000 and handle a shallow well or spring when erected on a hill with no wind obstructions. The Aermotors I saw were not working, but had survived, some in fine condition. One still had the governing spring intact.

I had hoped to spot more windmills or, at least, some different kinds. I saw sparrows tumble from the towers, chickadees working the scrub, jays and robins nesting in the tower webbing. I'd brought the wrong field guide and missed naming the other birds, the brown ones and the gray ones. And even the white sea birds, coasting down the valley south to the reservoir near Iowa City and even further on to the big Mississippi basin, flew by nameless. The guide to windmills is a great book, but it is part of the machinery of transformation. Baker mentions how restoration efforts of wooden, vaneless mills is being hampered by antique collectors who pilfer the decorative counter weights of stars and roosters and bulls. The book itself, though its stated purpose is to celebrate the utility of these machines, objectifies them instead. Many of the windmills pictured in the books are restored by windmill collectors who have a crop of them scattered in a pasture spinning and humming, milling the wind. Things of beauty. They are the ultimate lawn ornament. That is what *A Field Guide to American Windmills* is really about: the conversion of the device to art, a definition of its aesthetic. I had a classics professor once who said he knew now Structuralism was dead as a way of looking at texts, because it was showing up in his journals. The soul has gone out of this machine. Skeletons are left to pick over. If we ever need windmills again to power pumps or grind feed, chances are very good we will reinvent the wheel before we refer to Baker's book.

I think the windmill is not a symbol in itself. I think the windmill does not symbolize the farms as much as it symbolizes in a precise way what we want the farm to symbolize.

Another picture. This time it is a drawing on the dust jacket of Elizabeth Bishop's *Collected Poems*. It is a drawing of a Mexican town done by the author in 1942. In it I count 44 American-pattern windmills, of various models and makes and heights. They are all working, since the vanes are angled to the same degree. The wind is blowing at the artist's back. She is standing, at windmill level on a balcony, looking down on the town. Below there are wires. There is electricity. But a forest of windmills sprouts above the palm trees, some as tall as the cathedral spires. It is a magical scene.

I was at treetop level flying into Athens airport when the plane dipped on its glide, and at that moment there were hundreds of mirrored reflections from the flat roofs of Athens. That second the sun had caught the solar collectors on each roof. The city disappeared in brilliant winking light.

The electrical wire connected the farm to a grid, a manifestation of the farm's growing dependence on the larger world. The farm was connected, caught up in a network. Windmills in a city, individual power plants on each home, look incongruous to a North American. The windmill means what we'd like the farm to mean. It represents independence—self-sustaining, self-generating life. A city is the exact opposite to us. There, everything is connected by wires and pipes, hot and cold running everything, a different type of utility. Baker in his book mentions that the ranchers in the Southwest resisted the switch from wood to metal windmills because they could repair the wood ones with things on hand—nails, bolts, rawhide. To them, even steel windmills might place the farmer at a disadvantage. The idea was to remain disentangled from the wires of the world.

Of course the farms were always connected. The farmers who use windmills still, the Amish, are closely knit. But those connections, the connections of the windmill, are invisible, made of air and not run through meters. The windmill stands for the solitary worker, the resourceful American farm. Still turning, the windmill means that the whole machinery of myth is still turning.

In Belle Plaine the old men were putting out their gardens. Their backyards could have been painted by Grant Wood. The white siding of the houses met the green lawns. The gardens were staked and strung. All those horizontal lines. And each black square of ground had a tin windmill on a tower only slightly taller than a man. When the breeze let up, the wheels let off their mad whirring and craned back and forth as if sniffing for wind. □

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Oriental City

ERIN McGRAW

Bangkok is a dizzyingly large city, congested and polluted almost beyond belief by the relentless prowling of trucks, buses, taxis, motor scooters, the motorized three-wheel scooters called tuk-tuks. Women commonly walk down streets breathing through white handkerchiefs held up to their mouths like surgical masks. After a few days of smarting eyes and aching lungs I tried it myself. By evening the handkerchief was blackened.

People are everywhere, on every sidewalk and in every store. Street vendors are set up along any blank stretch of territory, however small, selling barbeque on a stick or the broth called *kwitio* that patrons carry away in plastic bags, the way I carried goldfish when I was a girl. Later, other vendors join them, selling bootleg cassette tapes, bootleg designer clothes, more food. I marveled. How could they stay afloat, so many of them? I couldn't imagine any market vast enough to support such an array of goods, even if each stall owner patronized his neighbor in some inscrutable ritual of entrepreneurship. But the patrons materialize to finger the cloth and leather and argue about price. The street vendors bring home enough money each day to return the next, when once again patrons will be produced from some capillary of the city.

Bangkok is Byzantine in its complexity, intricate and elaborate as a computer chip. A half dozen large boulevards bisect its full expanse—assuming an unlimited amount of time, a person can ride a bus on one of these avenues all the way across Bangkok for six cents—and most of the city's official business is conducted along these main drags. The consuls and embassies, the major shopping areas, government offices, the Grand Palace and the holiest temples are all located along Sukhumvit or Ramkamhaeng or New Phetchaburi roads. A person—especially a *farang*, a westerner—could live in Bangkok for years without having to stray beyond the wide, well-lit, traffic-clogged streets.

Still, to most Bangkok residents the city is made up of the *sois*, the tiny alleys that curve like tendrils off the avenues. A mile-long stretch of Sukhumvit Road might support as many as thirty *sois*, and each *soi* sprouts others, tiny and narrow and dark, that finally spiral tightly into extinction. The *sois* are fiercely crowded, filled not only with small and often makeshift homes, but with vendors set up in kitchens, the few feet of garden, or the patios of better-off *sois*, inhabitants selling each other battery parts and coconut milk while dogs—omnipresent in this Buddhist country—sleep on every threshold.

But—and this will perhaps sound strange—it is not squalid. Perhaps it was only my unease after so many coddled years in small-town Indiana. I shouldered down sidewalks jammed with people, a presence constant and impassive as rushing water, and assumed unrelenting personal danger. Saturday night specials. White slavers, or at least purse snatchers. It was weeks before I came to see that for all the overpopulation of the city, there is none of the delicate, idling menace of tense and crowded American cities.

Bangkok is humming; in fact, it's thriving. It's the going place, the do-or-die town, the big apple. There is in Bangkok the feeling of New York a hundred years ago; people are out every day to make it, make good. Life is on display, taking place every second on the streets, and exhausting as it can be to try to walk four blocks in debilitating heat and against crowds that are solid and unthinking as a tide, there's exhilaration too.

Which took me some time to find, since I was looking, at first, for all the wrong things. Thailand! I was expecting delicacy, things exquisite and inscrutable and oriental. A whole city of lacquered boxes, and classical dancers with three-inch brass fingernails. Instead there were Horatio Algers, along with a nearly universal degree of nationalism that I could never have imagined.

In part, but not entirely, this means a glorification of militarism. Thailand is a country that has never, in its long history, been colonized—edges of the country were prudently shaved and ceded to the British in Burma and the French in Viet Nam, but the Thais see themselves as a people who have remained unviolated for more than a thousand years, and the importance of self-defense plays like drums through Thai culture. (While Ronald Reagan is generally popular with the Thais, so long as he's not imposing rice or tapioca tariffs, the American really held up as a hero, a proper model, is Rambo.) Young boys aspire to the corps of cadets known loosely as "the king's boys," a group that drills and marches in formation, arranges itself in military units, and serves as a sort of prep school for officer training and the certainty of advancement. In the last forty years, Thailand has rocked from and toward military rule, and the prime minister—as Prem has shown himself mindful—overlooks the army at his own risk. It is a muscular factor in Thai politics.

At the moment, rule being civilian, the military presence is benign but inescapable. Landing at Don Muang airport, travelers are met by soldiers standing in pairs at every threshold, each casually holding a rifle. At the doors of banks, hotels, office buildings, malls, they are there. When my husband and I went to an amusement park at the far edge of Bangkapi, on the outskirts of the city, there were soldiers at the gate, grinning, laughing, holding machine guns. This is a country, I reminded myself, at peace. This is *why* we are at peace, Thais would tell me.

But the country's nationalism finds its primary outlet not in the strength of its standing army, but in its royalty. Every day, at noon and six o'clock, in every government building, office, or institution (including schools and

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universities), the national anthem is played. It is expected that all will stand and show respect. Before a movie is shown in any cinema, the anthem (composed by the king's father) is played, along with a cracked and faded filmstrip of his royal highness receiving the adulation of his people as he gives sacks of rice, diplomas, blessings. The king's face appears on all Thai currency. Once, when a *farang* received service he found wanting in a restaurant, he seized his roll of 100-baht notes, flung them down, and crushed them under his feet. Thais at neighboring tables, watching this, rose in outrage and methodically beat him until the police came to throw him in jail. His offense: putting his feet, his most unclean appendages, on the image of the king.

The king is His Majesty King Bhumipol Adulyadej, whose 60th birthday is occasion for declaring 1987 Visit Thailand Year. His image is everywhere—his glasses, his clean jaw. As has been pointed out, he bears a remarkable resemblance to Buddy Holly. He is assumptively referred to as "the king"—no elaboration is necessary, no nicknames are acceptable. The Thais accord the king (and the queen, and the crown prince and princess) a degree of reverence that is difficult to describe in American terms. He is certainly wildly popular, but no Thai would think of him in such terms. He is the king, and as such merits perfect respect and obedience. The sort of affectionate satire dished out to Queen Elizabeth by the English media would quite literally endanger the life of any would-be satirist in Thailand. Perhaps a more appropriate comparison would be to Eva Perón, for while he is not visibly corrupt or flamboyant (when he travels through his country or abroad, he carries a camera like any *farang*), he is held in perfect reverence by subjects who prostrate themselves at the feet of his shadow.

Acceptance of all this veneration doesn't come easy to an American. "Would you look at the overbite that woman has?" I said companionably to my husband as we looked at postcards of the crown princess, Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

Scandalized, he dragged me to a far corner of the book store. "You can't *talk* that way in public," he whispered furiously. "This is the stuff that gets people arrested."

"What kind of police state *is* this?" I hissed back. Except, I finally realized, it isn't a police state when it's the Thais themselves who are enforcing the rules. As day followed day and week followed week, I began to see that the devotion rendered to the king is whole-hearted and unquestioned, as much a part of daily life as religion, and for many Thais more important. The king is the living symbol of a tradition and culture that stretches back over a thousand years, and so he is the symbol of pride, and cultural homogeneity, and the ability to prevail. And for all that, he seems an amiable person, with his camera and his horn rims.

After you spend any amount of time in Thailand, you begin to feel familiar with the king; photographs of him are everywhere. In shops, by vendors' stands, in homes and as personal amulets are the images of him with farmers, at schools, engaged in dozens of state-dictated functions. My favorites were the pictures from his coronation, showing him in centuries-old regalia—the spiraling crown, the pointed, elevated shoes, clothes that were encrusted with gold. He hovers, this king, something like a likeable deity. I couldn't get used to it. I'm still not.

As we made our way through daily life in Bangkok, riding the crammed buses, going to the huge department store cunningly called The Mall to buy coffee and soap, I fretted. It all felt western, despite the signs in lovely and baffling Thai letters, despite driving on the left, despite my *farang* body, which felt outsized and clumsy and pale as worms. It took some time before I recognized that Bangkok is less western than it is simply urban.

For all the traffic, there is Asia on every side. On the streets men and women wear traditional wrap skirts. Women carry bundles suspended from long poles over their shoulders. Any busy, built-up stretch of road sporting modern office and apartment buildings might give over abruptly, for a lot or two, to fields filled with wild reeds. And more jarring than any of this are the *wats*.

The *wats* are the temples that fill Thailand. They stand dazzlingly in the midst of The Cheap International School of architecture that prevails in Bangkok—hasty, boxy buildings that are often beginning to crumble before the final facades are in place, because of substandard contracting or materials. The primary visual interest of these buildings consists of the heavy, crime-discouraging wire mesh stretched over windows even five stories up. The boxes proceed, pale and drab, for a block or two at a time, when suddenly a *wat* rears up, rowdy and cacophanous.

The *wats* have dragons, and alligators. They are red and blue and gold, and their rooflines pitch and heave, terminating in corkscrewed points at every corner that keep demons from perching there. They stand in swept dirt courtyards that are set back from the noisy roads, and are busy with chickens, dogs, orange-clad monks. (Monks' robes in fact vary in hue from muddy brown to a clear, frank yellow, but convention forbids calling attention to this. Ask any Thai what the differences in color mean and he will say that all the robes are orange.)

The monks are the vital link between the ornate, overembellished *wats* and the modern city, because the monks filter throughout the city—on buses and in The Mall, traveling up and down the length of the country, teaching and learning and often simply touring. There is automatic respect accorded the monks, for merit is gained toward the next life by generosity to the monks in this one. Women draw back as they pass; it is forbidden for a woman to touch even a monk's garment. Motoring peacefully along a landscape otherwise dominated by smog and high-rise buildings, they present a discordant note.

As do the *wats* themselves. They feel anomalous; they are unexpected and exaggerated squares of ornamentation inside the confines of this hurried city. But once again the feeling, the western sense of quaintness and knee-jerk appreciation for embalmed ritual, is all wrong. This is not Chartres, not Rouen, and the *wats* are not preserved as a gesture to a glorious past. (In fact, the *wats* are often not preserved at all, since a person gains more merit by building a new *wat* than restoring an old one.)

The Wat Phra Keo is the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, in the complex of ancient and ornate buildings near the river with the Grand Palace and the National Museum. Including all of the monuments, monks' quarters, and secondary temples at the site, there are perhaps two city

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blocks' worth of buildings surrounding the *wat*. They are all at least two stories tall, and they are all encrusted with ornamentation. At the simplest, they are covered with complicated mosaics that repeat lotus after lotus over every inch of the exterior. The eight central buildings are covered with red or blue mirrors, each a half-inch square, and yard upon yard of gold leaf. When the sun is shining—roughly 90 percent of the time in Thailand—the reflection off these buildings is literally blinding. Thus even the proud city dwellers are struck down. Thus even Bangkok, whose name means city of angels, is dazzled.

Here, as at every *wat* in the city, even the small ones where the gold leaf has flaked away, the joss sticks are burning, the wreaths of flowers are laid on trays as offerings that are collected, endlessly, by the monks. Praying is quiet, personal. Visitors face serene images of the Buddha—ten in Wat Phra Keo. Outside the temple are shoes, the tennis shoes of the tourists, the sandals and thongs of the monks and Thais. Every day the people come, offering incense and flowers, minds turned ahead, however briefly, to the next life. It's living and daily and current, this religion that is scarcely changed since the Buddha received enlightenment and laid down its precepts. Like nationalism and king-worship, it's a necessary element of the Thai culture that stretches back and back. Western countries define themselves by revolutionary change, by magna cartas and declarations and manifestoes. Thailand finds itself in sheer continuity, fitting new life into the old.

Or at least this is part of it. Being such an abject foreigner, unable even to sound out street signs, put me in the position of constantly trying to define, assign patterns and grand design. Did the elaborate ticket-tearing of the busfare collector recall ancient intricacies? All I know for certain is that the Thailand I briefly lived in bore precious little resemblance to the exotica I had imagined (although I did, by the end, see classical dancers and, once, an elephant ambling sulkily down Ramkamhaeng Avenue). In the end, the Thailand I found was far more foreign than anything I could have prepared for. In the end, it slipped through my clumsy fingers, as intricate and subtle as a dreamed city. □

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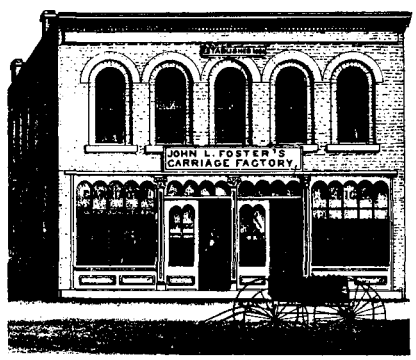

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IVAN ILLICH

A Plea for Research on Lay Literacy

By lay literacy I mean a symbolic fall-out from the use of the Alphabet in Western cultures. I mean something quite different from clerical literacy, which consists in the ability to read and to write. By lay literacy I mean a distinct mode of perception in which the book has become the decisive metaphor through which we conceive of the Self and its place. By lay literacy, I do not mean the spread of written contents beyond the pale of the clerics, to others who can only listen to what is being read to them. I use the term lay literacy to speak of a mind frame which is defined by a set of certainties, which has spread within the realm of the Alphabet since late medieval times. The lay-literate is certain that speech can be frozen, that memories can be stored and retrieved, that secrets can be engraved in conscience and therefore examined, that experience can be described. By lay literacy I mean therefore a weave of categories that—since the twelfth century—has shaped the mental space of the illiterate laity just as much as that of the literature clergy. It constitutes a new type of space, inside which social reality is re-constructed: a new kind of network of fundamental assumptions about all that can be seen or known. I have tried to follow the evolution of this mind-set since the Middle Ages, and the transformation of a number of certainties that can exist only within it. I will illustrate how such a transformation happens, by telling the story of "the text."

Two reasons commend the History of Lay Literacy to the attention of people who pursue research *on*, and not only *in*, education. The first is the new level of concern within the educational enterprise, with universal clerical literacy as a goal to be reached before the year two thousand. The other is the widespread tendency to replace the book as the fundamental metaphor of Self-Perception by the metaphor of the computer.

As to the first, we are all aware that new psychological, managerial and electronic techniques are being used to spread the clerical skills of reading and writing. Whether, and, if so, how these literacy campaigns interact with lay literacy ought to be better understood. Fifty years ago Luria studied the major shifts that occur in mental activity as people acquire clerical literacy. Their cognitive processes cease to be mainly concrete and situational. They begin to draw inferences, not only on the basis of their own practical experience, but on assumptions formulated in language. Since Luria first did these studies in Stalinist Russia, much has been learned about the change which clerical literacy induces in perception, representation, reasoning, imagination and self-awareness. But in most of these studies a causal link is assumed to exist between the individual's writing skill and the new mind-frame he or she acquires. As I will show, in the light of the History of Lay Literacy, this assumption is largely false. Since the Middle Ages, the certainties that characterize the literate mind have spread, overwhelmingly, by means other than instruction in the skill of reading and writing. This is a point which should be kept present in the current discussions on illiteracy, semi-literacy and post-literacy. The approach currently used in spreading the skill of "written communication" might actually be subversive to the literate mind.

While I do want to call your attention to the just mentioned independence of the literate mind from per-

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sonal writing skills, my main argument centers on the current transmogrification of the literate mind itself. During the last decade, the computer has rapidly been replacing the book as the prime metaphor used to visualize the Self, its activities and its relatedness to the environment. Words have been reduced to "message units," speech to the "use of language," conversation to something called "oral communication" and the text from the string of sound symbols to one of (binary) "bits." I want to argue that the mental space into which literacy certainties fit, and that other mental space that is engendered by certainties about the *Turing Machine* are heteronomous spaces. The study of the mental space that has been generated by lay literacy seems to me a necessary step if we are to grasp the nature of that entirely different mental space which is becoming dominant in our time. And just as lay literacy is largely independent of the individual's clerical skills, so is the cybernetic mind largely independent of the individual's technical proficiency on a computer.

Solid foundations for research on the literate mind have been laid; I only plead that the result of this research be applied in education, to recognize unacknowledged postulates which are implied in the axioms from which educational theories flow. The first to observe the depth of the epistemological break between oral and literate existence was Millman Parry, some sixty years ago. Through him we come to recognize the Island of Literacy that rises out of the magma of epic orality as a potter-scribe takes down the song of a bard, which we call the Iliad. His pupil Albert Lord convinces us that the steps by which one becomes a bard cannot be grasped with the same concepts as those by which one becomes a literate poet. Eric Havelock argues convincingly that the profound changes in the style of reasoning, in the mode of perceiving the universe, the appearance of "literature" and of science in 6th and 5th century Greece can be understood only in connection with a transition from the oral to the literate mind. Others have explored how the unique and once-and-for-all invention of the alphabet spread to Brahmin India and thence to the Orient. The circumstances under which new European people were brought into the realm of literate perception are well known to me, and for this reason I take my main examples from that epoch. Elisabeth Eisenstein, in her monumental study on the impact of the printing press on Renaissance culture, has dealt with another major transformation within the literacy mind in yet another epoch. Jack Goody, the anthropologist, has turned our attention to the ever-ongoing "alphabetization of the savage mind." And Walter Ong, over the last two decades, has pulled together the research of psychologists, anthropologists and students of epics to argue . . . that alphabetization is equivalent to the "technologization" of the word. So far, however, no one has attempted a history of the literate mind as distinct from clerical literacy. And it is a discouraging task. The literate mind is a phenomenon both brilliantly clear and slippery, like a jelly-fish whose features and shapes can be discerned only so long as it is observed within its own milieu.

To make my plea for this novel research plausible, I will explain the steps which led me to my present position. This I will do by criticizing my own *Deschooling Society* for its naive views. My travelogue begins 16 years ago, at a point when that book was about to appear. During the nine months the manuscript was at the publishers', I grew more and more dissatisfied with its texts, which did not, by the way, argue for the elimination of schools. This misapprehension I owe to Cass Canfield, Harper's owner, who named my baby, and, in doing so, misrepresented my thoughts. The book, instead, advocates the disestablishment of schools, in the sense in which the Church in the U.S. has been disestablished. But what I called for, was the "disestablishment of schools" for the sake of education, and here—I then noticed—lay my mistake. Much more important than the disestablishment of schools, I now saw, was the reversal of those trends which make of education a pressing need, rather than a gift of gratuitous leisure. I had begun to fear that the disestablishment of the educational church would lead to a fanatic revival of many forms of degraded education. Norman Cousins published my own recantation in the *Saturday Review* during the very week my book came out. In it, I argued that the Alternative to Schooling was not some other type of educational agency, or the design of educational opportunities into every aspect of life, but a society which fosters a different attitude of people to tools. Since then, my curiosity and my reflections have focused on the historical circumstances under which the very idea of educational needs can arise.

To make it easier to follow my own route, let me recall for you how I came to the study of education. I came from theology. As a theologian I specialize in ecclesiology. It constitutes the only old learned tradition—in social analysis—that distinguishes fundamentally between two entities: the visible community in which the spirit is embodied, and the quite different community which is the city or the state. This dualism is of its essence. Emboldened by fifteen-hundred years of ecclesiology, I saw the Church as more than a mere metaphor for the new Alma Mater. I intended increasingly to stress the fundamental continuity between the two seemingly opposed agencies: at least insofar as they define the meaning of education in successive centuries.

Within ecclesiology the study of Liturgy has always been my favorite topic. This branch of learning deals with the role of the cult in bringing about the phenomenon of "Church." Liturgy studies how solemn gestures and chants, hierarchies and ritual objects create not only faith, but the reality of the community-as-church which is the object of this faith. Comparative liturgy sharpens the eye to distinguish the essential mythopoetic (myth-making) rituals from the accidents of style. So sensitized, I began to look on those things that go on within schools as parts of the Liturgy. Used to the great beauty of Christian liturgy, I was of course put off by the abject style so common in schools.

I then began to study the place that the liturgy of schooling holds in the social construction of modern reality, and the degree to which it has created the need for education. I began to discern the traces which schooling leaves on the mind-set of its participants. I focused my

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attention on the form of the scholastic liturgy by putting into parenthesis, not only learning theory, but also research which measures the achievement of learning goals. In the articles published in *Deschooling Society*, I gave a phenomenology of schooling: From Brooklyn to Bolivia it consists of age-specific assemblies around a so-called teacher, for three to six hours on two-hundred days of the year; yearly promotions which celebrate the exclusion of those who have failed or are banned into a lower stream; of subject matter more detailed and carefully chosen than any monastic liturgy ever known. Everywhere attendance varies from 12 to 48 pupils, and teachers may only be those who have absorbed several years of this mumbo-jumbo in excess of their pupils. Everywhere, pupils are obliged to acquire some "education"—which school was deemed to monopolize—and which was deemed necessary to make pupils into valuable citizens, each knowing at which class level he has dropped out from this "preparation for life." I did then see how the liturgy of schooling creates the social reality in which education is perceived as a necessary good. I was even then aware that enveloping, life-long education could, in the last two decades of the twentieth century, replace schooling in its myth-making function. However, I did not then suspect what I now propose as a subject for research: the waning of the traditional key-concepts of *literate* education, since the terms for them are used in metaphors that fit the computer. I did not then conceive of schooling as one of the masks behind which this transmogrification could take place.

At the time I was engaged in these reflections, we were at the height of the international development effort. School appeared as the world-wide stage on which the hidden assumptions of economic progress were being acted out. The school-system demonstrated where development could not but lead: to international standardized stratification; to universal dependence on service; to counter-productive specialization; to the degradation of the many for the sake of the few. As I wrote *Deschooling*, the social effects, and not the historical substance, of education was still at the core of my interest. I still accepted that, fundamentally, educational needs of some kind were an historical predicament of human nature.

My belief in my own unexamined assumption that by nature human beings belong to the species of *homo educandus* started to dim, as I studied the history of economic concepts from Mandeville to Marx (with Rene Dumont) and from Bentham to Walrass (with Elie Halevy), and also as I became aware of the historical nature of my own certainties regarding scarcity by reading Karl Polanyi. I recognized that, in Economics, there exists an important critical tradition, which analyzes as historical constructs the assumptions which economists of all colors make. I became aware that *homo economicus*, with whom we emotionally and intellectually identify, is of quite recent creation. And thus I learned to understand "education" as learning, *when it takes place under the assumption of scarcity in the means which produce it.* The need for "education" in this perspective, appears as the result of societal beliefs and arrangements which make the means for so-called "socialization" scarce. And, in this same perspective, I began to notice that educational rituals reflected, reinforced and actually created belief in the value of learning pursued under conditions of scarcity. With so-far-limited success I tried to encourage my students to do for the field of pedagogics what others have done in the field of economics.

Polanyi has shown that the exchange of goods predates, by many centuries if not millennia, the economic marketing of commodities. This pre-economic exchange is performed by status traders, who act more like diplomats than businessmen. By commenting on the *Politics* of Aristotle, Polanyi shows that the technique of marketing, in which the value of a good is made to depend on demand and supply and provides a profit for the merchant, is a Greek invention of the early fourth century. I found increasing evidence that the conceptual space within which *paideia* acquired a meaning comparable to what we call "education" defined itself at about the same time. What Polanyi has called the "dis-embedding" of a formal economic sphere within society happens during the same decade, during which a formal educational sphere was dis-embedded.

During that same century also, "Euclidian space" came into formal existence. Its creation and destiny provide a useful analogy to illustrate what I mean by a "mental space." Euclid was careful to state the axioms on which he built his geometry. He wanted them remembered as stipulations. However, as we moderns are now acutely aware, in one instance he stated as a "self-evident" axiom something which in fact required a postulate. When Euclid stated as axiomatic that two parallel lines never intersect, he unknowingly implied the existence of one space, namely that particular "space" that is now named after him. He made an assumption which, remaining unexamined, turned into a certainty, and for two-thousand years, Western learned tradition took it as a natural fact. Not until the turn of our century did Riemann demonstrate that a space in which two parallel lines never intersect is, for the mathematician, only a special case. Soon after Riemann had laid the mathematical foundation for relativity, anthropologists noticed that the members of many cultures do not see with Euclidian eyes. Ethnolinguists then confirmed that, for instance, Hopis or Dogons speak about space and directions in ways that can more easily be translated into the terms of mathematical tensors than into any Indo-Germanic language. On the other hand, historians found that ancient literatures describe space much more thoroughly by reference to smells, sounds and the experience of moving through an atmosphere than by evoking visual experience. Art historians like Panofski, and philosophers like Suzanne Langer, have made plausible that most artists paint that space which they and their epoch see. They did not organize their perception in the perspective that Dürer created, or within the coördinates of Descartes. Perspective, so the argument goes, was introduced into painting to express the new-found ability to see the world predominantly in a self-centered way. Parallel to Kuhn's chain of descriptive paradigms succeeding each other in the sciences, art historians speak of successive depictive

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paradigms, which correspond to distinct ways of perceiving visual space.

No attempt that can be compared with the historiography of economic or visual space has so far been made to explore the constitution and evolution of the mental space within which pedagogical ideas take their shape. This does not mean that all academic disciplines have remained prisoners to this "space"; it only means that the principal challenge to this mental confinement has been by non-educators, and so far, has not been accepted within the educational profession. Millman Parry's discovery of the heteronomy between oral and alphabetic existence could have made educators recognize the postulates which they unknowingly imply in the axioms of their field. But the relevance of Parry's discovery for a historical theory of education has so far gone unnoticed.

In his doctoral thesis on Homeric epithets, Parry was the first (in 1926) to notice that the transition from epic orality to written poetry in archaic Greece marks an epistemic break. He argued that for the literate mind it is nearly impossible to re-experience the context within which the pre-literate bard composes his songs. No bridge, built out of the certainties inherent in the literate mind, can lead back into the oral magma. I cannot here sum up the conclusions and insights reached during the last fifty years by Lord Havelock, Peabody, Notopoulos and Ong—the work which convinced me. But for those who have not followed their writings on the heteronomy of epic orality and literate poetry, let me hint at some of the firm conclusions I draw.

In an oral culture there can be no "word" such as we are accustomed to look up in the dictionary. In that kind of culture, what silence brackets may be a syllable or a sentence, but not our atom, the word. All utterances are winged, forever gone before they are fully pronounced. The idea of fixing these events into a line, of mummifying them for later resurrection, cannot even occur. Therefore, memory, in an oral culture, cannot be conceived as a storage-room or a wax-tablet. Urged on by the lyre, the bard does not "look up" the right word; one fitting utterance from the grab-bag of traditional phrases moves his tongue at the appropriate beat. Homer, the bard, never tried and rejected "le mot juste." Vergil changed and corrected the *Aeneid* up to the hour of his death; he already was the prototype of the literate poet, the genial "Schriftsteller."

Appropriately, the equivalent of our "curriculum" was called *Mousike* in the schools of fifth century Athens. Students learned to compose; writing remained a servile skill exercised mostly by potters until around the year 400 when Plato went to school. Only then does true "subject matter" come into being; only then can the wisdom of previous generations be transmitted in that generation's words, to be commented upon, in distinct and new words, by the teacher. Alphabetic recording is as much a condition for what we call science/literature, as it is necessary for the distinction between "thought" and "speech." Plato, one of the few giants who struggle over the divide between orality and literacy, makes this transition from ever-new recall experience to literate memory the subject of his *Phaedrus*. Plato was acutely aware that, with the teacher who sows (written) words, which can neither speak for themselves nor teach the "truth" adequately to others (*Phaedr.* 276 a) an entirely new epoch was opening and that the use of the alphabet would bar the return to the oral past.

With more clarity than the moderns, Plato seems to have been aware that with literacy a new mental space had come into existence, and, within it, previously unimagined concepts that would give an entirely new meaning to the upbringing of Lysias. Two things therefore can be distinguished in the history of educational assumptions: the beginning of pedagogical space, which might now be threatened, and the transformations of the web of pedagogical concepts that take substance within this space.

To demonstrate how one such axiom fitting the literate space has expanded and acquired a certain dominance, I will choose as my example the "text." The word is classical: in Latin it means textured and—only rarely—the composition of well-arranged sentences. At the time of the Lindisfarne Bible, the word is first used as an equivalent for Holy Scripture. Then, in the fourteenth century, it is actually used for the concept which we now take for granted, a concept which—as I will immediately show—under different designations had appeared already two-hundred years earlier. It is about the emergence of this idea or concept I want to speak, and not about the use of the term.

I choose the idea of the "text" as my example for two reasons: the idea is important in educational theory, and—thoroughly transmogrified—it is also central to communication theory. From the mid-twelfth century onward, the text is past speech, so encoded that the eye can pick it up from the page; in communication theory, the term stands for any binary sequence. The "text," as a hinge-element within the literate mind, has a beginning and an end.

By definition, the alphabet is a technique to record speech sounds in visible form. In this sense it is much more than any other notational system. The reader who is faced by ideograms, hieroglyphs, or even the non-vocalized semiotic beta-bet must understand the sense of the line before he can pronounce it. Only the alphabet makes it possible to read correctly without any understanding. And, in fact, for well over two-thousand years the decoding of the alphabetic record could not be performed by the eye alone. "Reading" meant loud or mumbled recitation. Augustine, the champion orator of his time, was surprised when he discovered that it was possible to engage in silent reading. In the *Confessions* he tells about his discovery, how he learned to read without making noise and without waking his brethren.

While occasionally practiced, silent reading would have been normally impossible until well into the seventh century: the break or empty space between words was unknown. Only a few monumental inscriptions spoke so to the eye by separating word from word. On wax-tablets, on papyrus, on parchment, each line was an uninterrupted sequence of letters. There was almost no other way of reading than rehearsing the sentences aloud, and listening to hear whether they made sense. Mere

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"dicta"—speech-fragments out of context—were practically unreadable. A sentence meant for the record was "dictated"; it was spoken in *cursus*, the classical prose-rhythm which we have now lost. By getting the hang of the *cursus* that the *dictator* had chosen, reading at sight became possible. The sense remained buried on the page until it had been voiced.

Word-breaks were introduced in Bede's time, as a didactic device. They were meant to facilitate the acquisition of Latin vocabulary by "thickheaded Scottish novices." As a side-effect, the procedure of copying manuscripts changed. Thus far, either the original had to be dictated by one monk to several scribes, or each scribe had to read aloud as many words as he could keep in his auditory memory, and then write them down while "dictating to himself." Space between words made silent copying possible; the copyist could now transcribe word-for-word. The previous line, made up of an uninterrupted sequence of thirty to fifty minuscules, just could not have been copied at sight.

Even though the codex of the Middle Ages contained visibly separated words, rather than the unbroken Indian line of letters, it still does not make the text visible. This new reality takes shape only after the time of Bernhard and Abelard. It is brought forth by the convergence of two dozen techniques, some with Arabic, others with Classical antecedents, and some entirely new. These new techniques conspire to support and shape a substantially new idea: that of a text which is distinct both from the book and from its readings.

Chapters get titles, and are divided by sub-titles. Chapter and verse are now numbered; quotations are marked by underlining by a different color of ink; paragraphs are introduced and, occasionally, marginal glosses summarize their subject; miniatures become less ornamental and more illustrative. Thanks to these new devices, a table of contents and an alphabetical subject-index now could be prepared, and references from one part to the other could be made within chapters. The book that formerly could only be read through, now is made accessible at random: the idea of consultation could acquire a new meaning, thanks to these devices. Books now could be chosen and picked up in a new mode. At the beginning of the twelfth century it was still the custom that, on certain Feast-days of each season, the Abbot would solemnly take the books from the treasury, where they were kept with jewels and relics of saints, and lay them out in the Chapter room. Each monk then picked one for his *lectio* during the following months. By the end of this same century, books had been moved out of the ark in the Sacristy, and they began to be stored in a separate library, well titled, on shelves. The first catalogues were made of the monastery's holding, and by the end of the next century, Paris and Oxford each boasted a union catalogue. Thanks to these technical changes, consultation, the checking of quotations, and silent reading became common, and *scriptoria* ceased to be places where each one tried to hear his own voice. Neither the teacher nor the neighbor could now hear what was being read and—partly as a result—both bawdy and heretical books multiplied. As the old habit of quoting from a well-trained memory-palace was replaced by the new skill of citing directly out of the book, the idea of a "text" which is independent from this or that manuscript became visible. Many of the social effects which have often been attributed to the printing press were in fact already the result of a text that could be looked up. The old clerical skill of taking dictation and reading out lines was now complemented by the skills of contemplating and searching the text with the eyes. And, in a complex way, the new reality of the text, and the new clerical skill, affected the literate mind, common to clerisy and laity alike.

For most practical purposes, penmanship and clerical status coincided until well into the fourteenth century. The mere ability to sign and to spell were taken as proof for clerical privilege, and anyone who could prove such capacity could escape capital punishment by claiming clerical privilege. But while the majority of clerics were much too unskilled to "look up" the text of a book, during the thirteenth century, for a vast lay-population the "text" became a constitutive metaphor for their entire mode of existence.

For those who are not medievalists, and who still desire a solid introduction to what is known to historians about the growing lay literacy of the West at that time, I recommend a book by Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*. He stresses not what clerical literacy contributed to literature and science, but how the spread of letters changed the self-perception of the age and ideas about society. In England, for instance, the number of charters used in the transfer of properties increased by a factor of one hundred or more between the early twelfth and the late thirteenth century. Further, the written charter replaced the oath, which is oral by its very nature. The "testament" replaced the clod of soil which the father had formerly put into the hand of the son whom he had chosen as heir to his lands. In court, a writ got the last word! Possessing, an activity exercised by *sitting upon, sedere,* was overshadowed in importance by the "holding" (tenancy, maintenance) of a title, something one does with the hand. Formerly, you solemnly walked with the buyer around the property that you wanted to sell: now you learned to point it out with your finger, and had the notary describe it. Even the illiterate acquired the certainty that the world is owned by description: "thirty steps from the rock shaped like a dog, and then to the brook in a straight

Coming in the NAR:

"Homing," by Lance M. Kinseth

New Fiction by Erin McGraw, Michael Blaine, Alvin Greenberg, Anne Calcagno and Walter Sanders

Reviews by Carolyn Hardesty, Stephen Minot, Thomas H. Thompson

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line . . ." Everyone now tends to become a *dictator*, even though scribes remain few. Surprisingly, even serfs carry seals, to put beneath their *dictation*.

Everyone now keeps records, even the devil. Under the new guise of a hellish scribe, portrayed as the "writing devil," he appears in late Romanesque sculpture. He squats on his coiled tail and prepares the record of every deed, word and thought of his clients for the final reckoning. Simultaneously, a representation of the Final Judgment appears in the tympanum above the main entrance of the parish Church. It represents Christ, enthroned as a judge, between the gate of Heaven and the jaws of Hell, with an Angel holding the Book of Life opened at the page corresponding to the individual Poor Soul. Even the rudest peasant and humblest charwoman can no more enter the church-portal without learning that their name and their deeds appear in the text of the Heavenly Book. God, like the Landlord, refers to the written account of a past, which, in the community, has been mercifully forgotten.

In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council makes auricular confession obligatory: the Conciliar text is the first canonical document which explicitly states that an obligation is binding on all Christians, *both* men and women. And Confession interiorizes the sense of the "text" in two distinct ways: it fosters the sense of "memory" and of "confession." For a millennium, Christians had recited their prayers as they picked them up within the community, with great local and generational variants. Sentences were often so corrupted that they might foster piety, but certainly did not make sense. The Twelfth Century Church Synods tried to remedy this state of affairs. Their canons imposed on the clergy the duty of training the laity's memory by having them repeat the words of the *Pater* and *Credo*, word for word, as they are in the Book. When the penitent went to confession, he had to prove to the priest that he knew his prayers by heart: that he had acquired the kind of memory on which words could be engraved. Only after this memory-test could he proceed to the examination of another spot of his heart, henceforth called his conscience, in which the account of his evil deeds, words and thoughts had been kept. Even the illiterate "I" that speaks in confession now perceives through new, literate, eyes its own "Self" in the image of a text.

The new kind of past, frozen in letters, is cemented as much in the Self as in Society; in memory and conscience, as much as in charters and account-books, descriptions and signed confessions. And the experience of an individual Self corresponds to a new kind of subject of the law which takes shape in the law-schools of Bologna and Paris, and becomes normative, over the centuries, for the conception of *person*, wherever Western society extends its influence. This new self, and this new society, are realities which can arise only within the literate mind.

In an oral society a past statement can only be recalled by a similar one. Even in societies where non-alphabetic notations are kept, speech does not lose its wings: when pronounced, it is gone forever. Pictographic or ideographic notation suggests to the reader an idea for which he must, anew, find a word. The alphabetic text fixes the sound. When it is read, the past *dictator's* sentences become present. A new kind of building material for the present has come into being: it is made up of the actual words of speakers long dead. And, in the late Middle Ages, the constitution of the visible text brings whole constructions from the past, in a new way, into the present.

In an oral society, a man has to stand by his word. He confirms his word by taking an oath, which is a conditional curse called upon himself in the event that he should become unfaithful. While swearing, he grasps at his beard or his balls, pledging his flesh as a troth. When a freedman swears, any case against him comes to rest. Under the literate regimen, the oath pales before the manuscript: it is no more the recall but the record that counts. And if there is no record, the judge is empowered to read the heart of the accused: so torture is introduced into the proceedings. The question is applied, and pries open the heart. Confession under torture now takes the place of oath and ordeal. Inquisitorial techniques teach the accused to accept the identity between the text that the court reads out to him, and that other text, which is etched in his heart. Only in the visual comparison of two texts, the identity of the two contents, that of the original and that of the copy, can be visually imagined. A miniature of 1226 preserves the first picture of the "corrector," a new official who leans over the shoulder of the scribe to certify the "identity" between two charters. It is again a clerical technique which is reflected in the new law of judicial evidence, which demands that the judge check the defendant's utterance against the truth at the bottom of his heart.

The literate mind implies a profound reconstruction of the lay-self, the lay-conscience, the lay-memory; no less than the lay-conception of the past and the lay-fear of having to face the doomsday book at the hour of death. All of these new features, of course, the laity and the clergy share: and they are effectively transmitted outside of schools and *scriptoria*. This point has, so far, been largely neglected by the historians of education. They have mainly focused on the evolution of clerical literacy, and have seen in these transformations of mental space but a side-product of chancellary skills. Historians have well explored the style of letters, of abbreviation, of integration between text and ornament; they have enlarged our knowledge of the impact that paper-making and the new smooth writing surface in the thirteenth century had on the evolution of a cursive script—which enabled scholastic masters to lecture from notes written by their own hand rather than dictated; they have observed the enormous increase in sealing wax used in chanceries; they can tell us that for a typical court session in the mid-twelfth century, barely a dozen sheep would lose their skins, while a century later several hundred hides would be needed to make into parchment. If historians have paid attention to the evolution of lay-literacy, or more generally to the new configuration taken by the literate mind, they usually have observed how it takes shape among clerics: how the new self came to be explored as a new psychological domain in the autobiographies of Guibert and Abelard; how new scholastic logic and grammar pre-

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supposed the visual textualization of the page. At best, some historians have attempted to understand how the increasing frequency with which *fabliaux* romances, travelogues and homilies were written for reading in front of a large public affected the style in which these were composed. Yet, obviously, while schools and *scriptoria* and the new technical notions of clerical literacy were essential to the spread of the literate mind, they were of secondary importance in its actual shaping and spread for the majority who, absent these measures, acquired it with amazing speed.

The details I have given, taken from the later twelfth century which I know best, all illustrate what I mean by the impact which one particular literate technique can have on the shape of an epoch's literate mind. They illustrate the arguable effect which the visible "text" has had at that moment on a web of other concepts which in their formation are dependent on the alphabet. I point to such notions as self, conscience, memory, possessive description, identity. It would be the historian's task to see how this web is transformed in successive epochs: under the influence of late medieval *narratio*, of "fiction," Renaissance critical text-editions, the printing press, vernacular grammar, the "reader," and so on. At each stage, the historian of education would get new inspiration by starting his inquiry from the evidence of new forms of lay-literacy rather than from new ideals and techniques of teachers. However, my plea for research is not primarily motivated by my interest in this neglected side of educational research, dealing with phenomena that take place within the alphabetic culture-space. My main reason for pleading for this research is concerned with the exploration of that space itself. I feel my very self threatened by the waning of this space.

I still remember a shock I had in Chicago in 1964. We were sitting around a seminar table; opposite me sat a young anthropologist. At the critical point of what I thought was a conversation, he said to me "Illich, you can't turn me on, you do not communicate with me." For the first time in my life I became aware that I was being addressed not as a person but as a transceiver. After a moment of disarray, I began to feel outrage. A live person, to whom I thought that I had been responding, experienced our dialogue as something more general: namely as "one form of human communication." I immediately thought of Freud's description of three instances of sickening outrage which were experienced in Western culture: the "Kraenkungen," when the heliocentric system, evolution and the unconscious had to be integrated into everyday certainty. It is then, twenty-odd years ago, that I began to reflect on the depth of the epistemological break which I propose for examination. I suspect that it seems deeper than the breaks suggested by Freud—and certainly it is more directly related to the subject with which educators deal.

Only after several years of research on the history of that conceptual space which emerged in archaic Greece did I grasp how strongly the computer-as-metaphor is exiling anyone who accepts it from the space of the literate mind. I began to reflect on the emergence of a new mental space whose generating axioms are no more based on the encoding of speech-sounds through alphabetic notation, but instead on the power to store and manipulate "information" in binary bits.

I am not proposing that we examine the effects which the computer as a technical tool has on the keeping of and access to written records; nor how it can be used for the teaching of "the three R's." Equally, I am not proposing to study the spaces that the computer leaves on modern style and compositions. I call rather for reflection on a web of terms and ideas which connects a new set of concepts, whose common metaphor is the computer, and which does not seem to fit into the space of literacy, within which pedagogics originally took shape.

In calling for such attention I want to avoid the temptation to assign any causal function to the electronic machine. Just as those historians made a major mistake who maintained that the printing press was necessary to have the Western mind moulded by the "linear thought," so it would be a mistake to believe that the computer itself threatens the survival of the literate mind. A combination of small techniques in the *scriptoria* of twelfth-century monasteries created the visible text in which a very complex evolution of literate life-styles and imagery found its appropriate mirror, centuries before Gutenberg cut his first font. And I suspect that a future historian will see in a similar way the relationship between the computer and the waning of literate space. Under circumstances much too complex even to hint at, at the height of economic and educational development during the second quarter of the twentieth century, the web of literate axioms was weakened, and the new mental space or "structure" found its metaphor in the Turing Machine. It would be unwise, in this plea, to propose how this new break should be studied. But by recalling a story told by Orwell, I hope to make it plausible that the exploration of the break we are witnessing is central to the concern of any research on what "education" might be about.

It is important to remember that at the time Orwell worked on *1984* the language of "role theory" which Mead, Linton and Murdock had coined in 1932 was just being picked up by sociology. The vocabulary of "cybernetics" was still confined to the lab. Orwell, as a novelist, sensed the mood of the time and invented the parable for a mind-set whose elements were as yet unnamed. He reflected on the effects which the treatment of speech as communication would have on people, before the computer was available to model it on. In 1945 Western Union placed an ad in the *New York Times* seeking to employ "communications carriers," a euphemistic neologism for messenger boys. The OED Supplement gives this instance as the first use of the term with its current meaning.

Thus, Orwell's *Newspeak* is much more than a caricature of propaganda, or a parody of Basic English—which later in the thirties had for a while fascinated him. *Newspeak*, at the end of the novel, is for him the cipher for something which then had no English equivalent. This becomes clear in the scene in which O'Brian from the *Thought Police* says to Smith, whom he tortures: "We do not merely destroy our enemies, we change them . . . we

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convert, we shape them . . . we make our enemy one of ourselves before we kill him . . . we make his brain perfect before we blow it out . . ." At this point Smith, the novel's anti-hero, still believes that what O'Brian says must make sense to the speaker. The next pages describe how Smith is disabused of his literate mind. He will have to accept that O'Brian's world is both senseless and self-less, and that the therapy he undergoes has the purpose to make him join it.

Winston Smith works at the Ministry of Truth. He specializes in the abuse of language, propaganda in a caricature of Basic English. He practices extreme distortions that are possible within the literate mind. O'Brian has the task of leading him into an entirely new world; a "space" which Smith must first understand and then accept. O'Brian says to him: "Tell me, why we cling to power . . . speak!" Strapped, Winston answers "you rule over us for our own good . . . you believe that human beings are not fit to govern themselves . . ." This answer, which would have pleased Ivan's Inquisitor in Dostoyevsky's novel, makes O'Brian turn pain to "33 degrees." "We seek power entirely for its own sake." O'Brian insists that the *State is* power, and he has previously made Smith understand that this power consists in the ability to write *the* book. Winston is to be a line in that book, written or re-written by the State. "Power is in tearing human minds to pieces," says O'Brian "and putting them together again in new shapes of our own choosing." Torture enables Winston to abandon his belief that *Newspeak* is a degraded form of English; he understands that *Newspeak* is an exchange of meaningless know-how, without any *why* and without any *I*. When O'Brian holds up four fingers and calls them "three," Winston is to understand the message, not the speaker. At a loss for an English word for the exchange of message units between machines, Orwell calls the kind of intended relationship *"collective solipsism."* Without knowing the appropriate word, namely "communication," Winston has come to understand the world in which O'Brian's state operates. Orwell insists that the mere understanding of this world is not enough; it must be accepted.

To accept his existence without sense and self, Winston needs the ultimate therapy of "Room 101." Only after this betrayal does he take himself for granted as part of "a phantasy world in which things happen as they should"—namely on a screen. And to accept being just a message-unit of senseless power, Winston has first to erase his own self. Neither violence nor pain could break what Orwell calls his "decency." To become self-less like O'Brian, Winston must first betray his last love, Julia. Later, when the two former lovers meet as burnt-out hulls, they know that in Room 101 they had meant what they said. Self-betrayal in face of the rats was the last thing Winston *meant*. According to Orwell only betrayal could integrate the victim into the executioner's solipsistic system of meaningless communication.

I have now told you my fable. It is the story of the State that has turned into a computer, and that of educators, who program people so that they come to lose that "distality" between *self* and *I* which had come to flower within literate space. They learn to refer to themselves as to "my system," and to input themselves as appropriate lines into the mega-text. In the novel Orwell speaks tongue-in-cheek. He tells more than a cautionary tale, but he does not portray something he believes ever could come to be. He creates the cipher for the State that survives society; communication between role-players that survive the literate mind; people who survive the betrayal of "decency." *1984* is for Orwell the cipher of something impossible which his journalistic genius made appear imminent.

In retrospect, Orwell appears to some of us as an optimist; he thought that the cybernetic mind would spread only as a result of intensive instruction. In fact many people now accept the computer as the key metaphor for themselves and for their place in the world, without any need for "Room 101." Surreptitiously they cross over from the mental domain of lay literacy to that of the computer. And they do so, often with as little competence in the use of the machine as thirteenth century laymen had in the use of pen and parchment. The cybernetic mind engulfs a new kind of layman, without assistance from educational agencies. This is the reason why at the outset I called attention to two rarely formulated questions: First, is there any reason to believe that the new intense concern of the educational establishment with universal *clerical* literacy can, in fact, strengthen and spread the literate mind? And second, has schooling now become an initiation ritual introducing to the cybernetic mind, by hiding from its participants the contradiction between the literate ideas they pretend to serve and the computer-image they sell?

With these suggestions I hope to have clarified the subject and the urgency of the research for which I plead. This research is based on historical phenomenology of assumptions about speech. Only the technique of the alphabet allows us to record speech and to conceive of this record—in the alphabet—as "language" that we *use* in speaking. A certain kind of viewing the past and bringing up the young are determined by this assumption. The research I call for could set out to identify the assumptions which are characteristic and proper to "education" only within this mental space.

The research would further explore to what degree literates and illiterates alike share the special mind-set which arises in society that uses alphabetic record. It would recognize that the literate mind constitutes a historical oddity, of 7th century origin. It would further explore this space which is uniform in its characteristics, but diverse in all the distortions and transformations these permit. Finally this research will recognize the heteronomy of the literate space in regard to three other domains: the worlds of orality, those shaped by non-alphabetic notations and, finally, that of the cybernetic mind.

You can see that my world is that of literacy. I am at home only on the island of the alphabet. I share this island with many, who can neither read nor write, but whose mind-set is fundamentally literate like mine. And they are threatened, as I am, by the betrayal of those clerics who dissolve the words of the book into just one communication code. □

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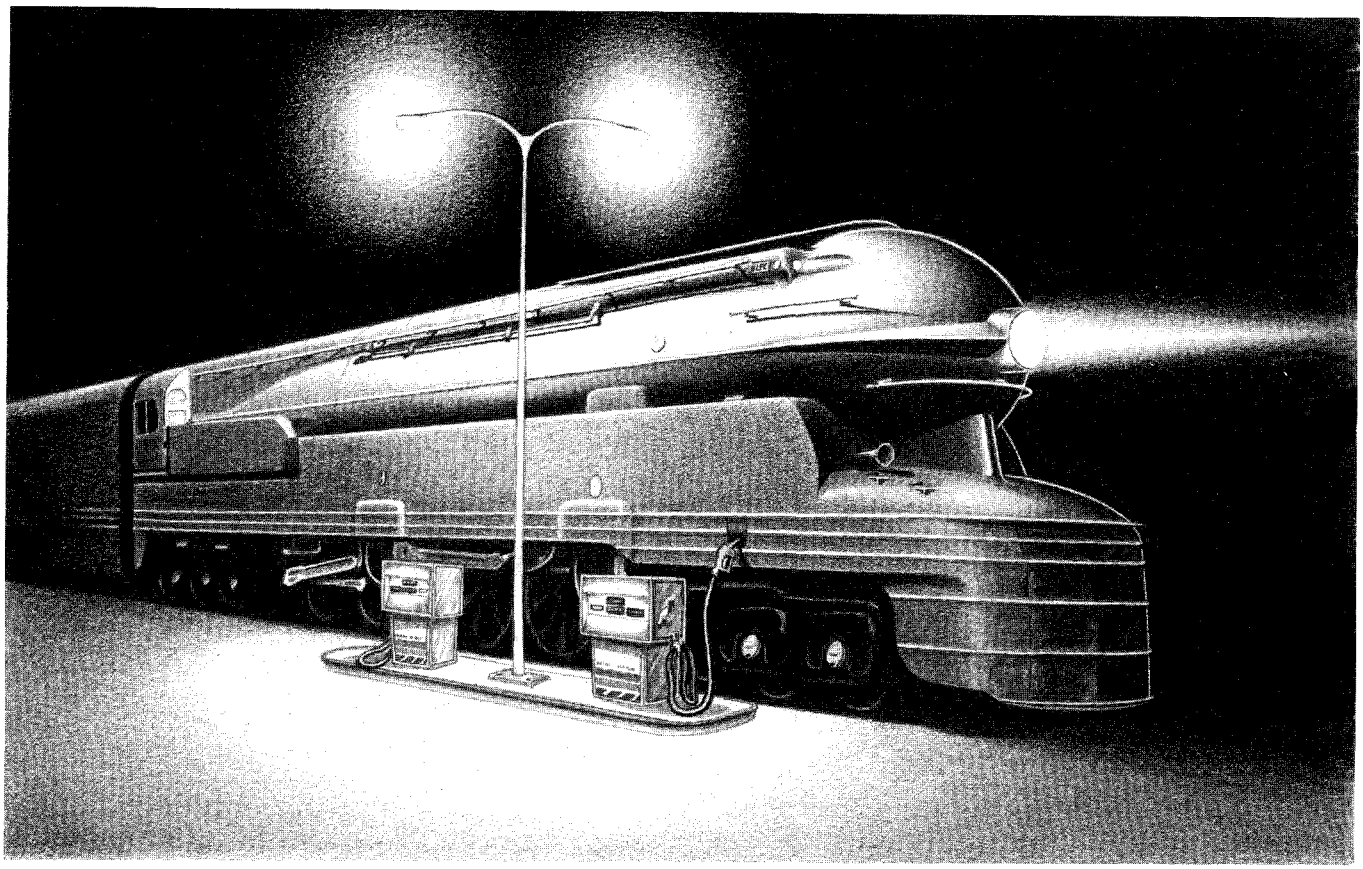

WAITING FOR TRAINS

Richard Currey

The sign above the garage doors says *HAPPY OTORING.*

Hollis wipes his big hands on a dirty rag. We stand together side by side on the concrete apron, and after a moment he says, "Took me damn near two months to get a new letter for that sign. Last time this happened."

"Last time?" I say. Making conversation.

"Niggers stole it," Hollis says. "That's what I figure."

We gaze together at the sign.

"Shoved a ladder up there and took it right down." Hollis pushes the rag into his hip pocket, looks at me. "That's one reason I need someone around here at night. Keep an eye on things."

I nod.

Hollis turns to watch the traffic go by. "Thing I'd like to know," he says, "is what's so damned fascinating about the letter M?"

"They took the same letter last time?"

Hollis looks at me, frowning. "Same damned letter. You believe that?"

Hollis is looking for someone to pump gas after dark, keep the station open until midnight. He spits on the concrete, turns his back to the traffic again. "Had to be those damned niggers," he says. "Who else'd do a thing like that?"

I stand with my hands in my pockets looking at the space where the letter should have been.

I get the job.

I meet her at The Pump House, a diner across the street from the station that serves breakfast around the clock. I go afternoons before the shift starts and she takes my order. I learn what tables she covers so I know where to sit, joke with her, make faces at the food. Call her Hamburger Queen. When I call her that she tells me her name is Shirl.

Shirl has fading yellow hair and eyes like the eyes of coal miners' wives sitting on shadowed porches I remember from childhood—hollowed-out, wistful— and I am eating scrambled eggs on the day she brings my second cup of coffee and sits down across from me in the red vinyl booth.

She watches me take a bite of toast. "Let's go for a ride tonight," she says.

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I pepper my eggs, smiling down at them. "Sounds good," I say. "But I don't have a car. I come up on the bus."

"I've got a car," she says. "We're both off at midnight. I'll pick you up."

I sip some coffee, look at her. "You know," I tell her, "you don't know me. Not beyond this place anyway."

"I *know* you," she says. "Listen, it's an invitation, O.K.? We'll just take a cruise. I'll just give you a lift home."

She pulls into the station lot at ten minutes past midnight. I turn out lights, make sure no junkies are asleep in the restrooms. Night receipts are in the floor safe. Wash my hands over a stained deepsink in the garage, go out through the office, and the radio is on in her car: Janis Joplin on a blue ride into the night.

"You won't believe it," Shirl says as I slide in on the passenger side.

"What?"

"I need some gas."

"Should have told me before I closed out, could have pumped you some free."

She waves a hand. "No problem," she says, "we'll find some." She eases the sedan out into a thin traffic stream. "So where to?"

"You mean where do I live?"

She lights a cigarette with the dashboard lighter, smiling at me. "Well," she says, blowing smoke, "I mean I got some time, I'm not too tired. Want to go somewhere?"

I think about it. "Let's go to the ocean," I say.

"The ocean? You mean, like Seal Rock?"

I tell her I just want to fill up on a little salt air.

"Hey, I know," she says, stopping for a light. "Let's go up to the Golden Gate. You know that little pull-off right before you get on the bridge? Ever been up there this time of year? The smell of those flowers up there is just like you wouldn't believe."

"Don't forget the gas," I say.

She accelerates away from the intersection and changes lanes to pick up an all-night Phillips 66 on the right, moves the car in beside the pumps and turns the engine off. "So is that an O.K. idea?"

"The bridge?"

"Yeah. You can see the water from there." She smiles. "You can smell it, too."

"Sure," I say, "let's roll up there and smell the flowers."

A middle-aged man is at her window. He has the demolished face of an ex-boxer. She works in her purse and hands out three singles. "Regular," she says.

We ride and I begin to fade in the silence between us. She asks about me and I tell her about getting out of the Marines, about finding a job on a laundromat bulletin board.

She asks if I am back from Nam. She sounds as if she has been there herself.

She talks about waitressing, says she was originally from Tennessee. Her father was career military. Retired, she says. Works part-time as a security guard.

I watch out the open window, cool burgundy air and passing cars, bouganvillea and rose arbors in amber-lit doorways.

"Hey, you O.K.?"

I turn to her and she glances away from the road to look at me.

"Sure," I tell her. "Just thinking."

"Thinking about what?"

I don't answer, and we keep each other's eyes a moment before she turns back to the road.

The car drops and turns through the dark Presidio, walkways and guardrails sliding close, and I see the double arcade of light walking out ahead, Golden Gate levitating towards Marin. She brakes, turns into the visitors' lot.

We get out and the wind picks us up, stronger than I'd expected, gusting and cold. The smell of blossoms is what she'd described, a rich vapor cascading under the wind's roar.

Shirl walks ahead and I catch up at a bend in the path: the lights of Berkeley and Oakland and San Francisco rise out of the black body of the bay and the wind is rushing at us, turning us back. The shape of the bridge rears above us. I feel like an intruder.

"This is a famous suicide jump," I shout, my voice sounding sudden.

Shirl shifts her purse from one shoulder to the other. "God," she yells. "Don't go morbid on me."

A moment passes, both of us watching off across what we know is water but cannot see, and Shirl hooks her arm through mine, pulling me back up the slope. "Seen enough?"

"Smelled the flowers?"

"Come on," she says. "Let's go. It's cold."

Shirl picks me up at the station the next night, and the next night after that, and in a week it is as if we have been meeting every night all our lives, riders crossing the night, bottle of cheap wine on the seat between us. The radio fills the silences when we drive, and the older songs remind me of the summer I was drafted, the last summer before the war. I played in a journeyman band, juke and bar circuit up and down the Eastern Shore, Jersey south to Virginia. I lived on the money, pizza for breakfast from boardwalk vendors, walking the beaches past sunburned families on vacation, beach towels fluttering and whipping like alien flags. Afternoons passed in arcades shooting pinball, finding my favorite games, the ones I could beat. I collected penny fortunes from the stand-up machines that delivered my weight on small blue cards with pre-printed destinies. *You will invest well and marry wisely. An ocean voyage will bring prosperity. A tall dark man will change your life.*

"You lost in yourself again?" Shirl glances at me, and checks the rear view. "You can really go off, you know?"

"Yeah," I say. "I know."

One night Shirl is driving in Oakland, abandoned freight yards, single lights lit over empty parking lots. Pallets stacked two stories high, broken glass and baled newspapers in mounds and at a corner in the middle of all this

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chain-link is what looks like an old Tudor house. Shadows of turrets and cupolas against the sky. I ask Shirl what it is.

"Train station," she says. "I don't think they use it anymore. Not for passenger trains, anyway."

I look at the silhouette. "Freight depot?"

"I guess."

"Let's go over."

"Probably locked up."

"Just check it out. Might be worth looking at. I always liked trains anyway."

When I was a boy in West Virginia my brother and I shared what we believed was a secret, a place where we crouched with the smell of ramps and bitterweed and wild gladiolus, dark glade above a watercourse, waiting for trains. We said *down at the river* like it was a natural mystery, swam under the trestle, fifteen feet wide and no more than ten feet at the deepest under the bridge where the silt had been dug out years before to plant the stanchions. When I heard about drownings I thought about that water under the bridge, shadow's fall, darker and cooler. When my brother and I swam our feet never made bottom, we actually swam, full-bodied and sided against the heart and risk of the stream.

The railroad bridge emerged and crossed, native woods cut and nailed into place when the tracks went through, carbonized from years of heat and weight. When the trains pushed out of the glen they came in a rush, whisper and explosion of locomotive muscle and roar blowing out of some older time. I treaded water, looking up and thinking there was no other way to live: that easy speed whirling the forest, wind and potent silence in the wake.

We threw stones against the boxcars hearing them resound hollow or full, laid pennies on the track and gathered them after a train passed over for our trading collections. I imagined how we must have looked from the passenger coaches: sunflash of two boys bobbing white against the green pane of placid creek.

Shirl listens to me talk about the water and the power in the trains, about boyhood summers in that place. After a moment she says, "So where's your brother now?"

"Dead," I say.

"Jesus," she whispers. "I'm sorry."

We are inside the station sitting on a scarred bench that can still gleam mahogany in the half-light. A janitor sweeps around us and never asks what we are doing here. "Jeep accident," I tell Shirl. "In Panama." Looking at a faded chalkboard listing departure times I see the last passenger train left for Fresno late in 1964.

"So what was he doing in Panama?"

"Army." I look at her. "There was a rule at the time. Two brothers in the Army couldn't be in combat at the same time. I went to Nam. He was supposed to be the lucky one."

"Not so lucky, I guess," Shirl murmurs, looking at the floor.

"Not so lucky," I say.

Shirl lights a cigarette, and there is another moment between us before she says she is going for a drink of water. I walk out on the platform. The rails shine blue in moonlight, trailing away from the station yard. The janitor is out here too, pushing a pile of dust and candy wrappers over the edge. Shirl's voice behind me: she says it's getting late.

"I guess the lady's right," I say to the janitor.

"Yes sir," he says with exaggerated politeness, "I believe that she is."

Shirl set a night for a dinner, our first real dinner together, and when I find the address she'd given me the door is open and I hear voices from the back of the house. I knock but no one comes so I step in, stand in the doorway, call her name. I think I hear her answer. Then she walks through a hallway, nothing on but bra and panties, out of sight again, hurrying, and a door closes. In that light her face seemed bruised. A toilet flushes and a man comes into the hallway carrying a beer can, no pants on, only a ripped T-shirt straining over a gut, stops short when he sees me.

We stand, staring at each other, not speaking, startled.

Then he says: "Who the fuck are you?"

I start to tell him.

"Get the hell out of here," he shouts. I can smell him: drunk, hostile. He steps closer. "I could kill you and be within my rights," he says, now a heavy whisper, "walking in here like this."

I want to explain, open my mouth to speak and he throws the beer can. I step sideways and the can hits the wall behind me, beer frothing and bubbling down the wall to the floor. I think I hear Shirl crying behind a closed door.

I walk back to the bus stop in the bright afternoon and stand alone and wait, windswept.

I don't see Shirl for a week. She isn't at The Pump House, doesn't come to the station at night. On an afternoon after breakfast I ask the waitress about her.

"Shirl?" Writing out my check, pausing to think. "Lessee, you had the two eggs scrambled?"

"Yeah."

"Shirl, yeah. She quit. That's what I heard."

"Quit?"

"Yeah. Lot of family problems." She stacks my dishes and sponges the formica surface in two sweeps. "Why?"

I count out change for the bill and put a tip on the table. "We were friends. I just missed her being around, wondered what happened."

"Seems like trouble with her husband," the waitress tells me. "That's what I heard. Guess she just needed time to sort out."

"She was married?"

The waitress smiles at me, raises her eyebrows. "I wondered if you knew."

I walk across the road to the station, thinking of the man I had seen in Shirl's house. Probably her husband. Hollis is in the bay; I hear him talking to himself underneath an old Ford pick-up. I sit on the torn naugahyde sofa provided for the occasional waiting customer, watch the traffic move and try to imagine how things begin, how anything finds a first moment and drives out of that darkness into a life.

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Hollis leaves about 3, waving from the wrecker he always drives home.

Near closing time, at the desk counting receipts for the shift and I look up to see the boy. Late teens, hair oiled blue-black, Mediterranean, and the heavy nickel-plated pistol pointed down into my chest. He looks at my body, the area the barrel is trained on. A moment passes before he speaks.

"Just the money," he says, "and I'm out of here."

I don't move.

"Come on, *move*." His voice is hoarse.

I get up, look out the window. An early-model Mercury sits between me and the pumps, chrome and fins, a pale tan. A woman sitting inside the car has hair the same color.

"Never mind out there," the boy with the gun says. "Nobody can see us from the street." He waves the pistol at the cash register. "Just get the money."

I try to unlock the cash register and my hand shakes. I imagine the ways I might be found dead in the morning. The boy goes behind the desk and looks at the circular lid of the floor safe, pointing the pistol at it as if he is going to shoot. Then he steps back and tells me to open it.

I move behind the desk, stoop to pry up the lid and turn the combination. Pull the canister out, empty it on the floor, stand, back away.

"Just stand still."

He pushes the gun barrel through the checks and credit card slips, looks at the pile a moment before standing up, bringing the gun back to bear on my chest, just below my chest, dead center.

"See the bag?" He jerks his head to the rear. Behind him, a neatly folded grocery sack on the naugahyde sofa. I nod.

"Just empty the register into that bag."

I move around him, close enough to smell him, drugstore cologne and tobacco, pick up the bag and clear the trays and put everything in. "That's it," I say.

"Now just hold it." He reaches down to the phone line, pulls, loose cord skitters out from under the desk. He pulls again and the phone comes down, hits the floor with the bell echoing, pulls again and the cord gives way. He steps forward and takes the sack and backs toward the door pointing the big pistol at me, walks backward watching me until he hits the Mercury. As soon as he turns to get in I step into the garage, lean against the wall, blow out a long breath.

I try to breathe evenly, feel the breaths coming and try to count them, concentrate on counting them. A car left overnight sits cooly in half-silhouette, impassive. The sea air coming through a high transom in the back wall chills my sweat.

In the office I put the phone on the desk and plug the jack back into the wall socket. The Mercury is gone and traffic drifts by in a simple ordinary way and the lit station sign turns slow circles against the night sky.

"Jesus Christ," Hollis says, staring down into the empty cash register drawer. He looks up at me. "You let the son of a bitch have everything in here. You know that?"

"Hollis," I tell him, "the guy had a gun big as my goddamn head. He could have anything he wanted."

Hollis glares at me.

One of the policemen who answered my call says, "Your boy did the right thing. Never pays to argue with a firearm."

Hollis keeps the look on me, but says to the policeman: "I can see you ain't running your own business for a living."

The policeman is the younger of the two. His partner is in the garage, throwing a flashlight beam over the brick walls. The younger one stands and arranges a sheet of paper on a clipboard. "I'll need to go through a few questions," he says.

Hollis asks me, "How much'd he get off with?"

I shrug. "Forty, maybe fifty dollars."

Hollis looks back into the cash drawer, shaking his head. "Fifty goddamn dollars."

"Mr. Hollis?" The younger cop. "Why don't you just have a seat over there so I can get this done?"

Hollis turns, sullen.

"Please," the policeman says.

Hollis goes to the naugahyde sofa and slumps. While I describe the boy, car, and gun, the older cop steps in from the garage, listens to me. "That's real good," he says. "Lotta detail."

"Real fine," the younger cop says. "This'll help."

"Hell," the older one says. "It's enough to jerk the guy inside a week. He'll do 3-to-5 in San Quentin for a shitty little fifty bucks."

"Nothin shitty about that fifty dollars," Hollis calls from the sofa. "That's hard-earned money."

Both of the policemen look at Hollis.

"What about my letter anyway?" Hollis says. "You people never did a damn thing about that either."

The older cop says, "Your letter?"

"My letter M. I reported it stolen."

"Forget it," I say.

"Right, forget it," Hollis says, lifting both hands into the air, a supplicant. "That's probably what you told the guy that robbed the place."

The younger cop has me sign the statement. "Might need you again if we get the guy," he tells me. "You'll hear from us."

"Cold day in hell," Hollis mumbles.

I splash water on my face over the deepsink in the garage and walk out of the station with Hollis talking to me. I pick up a bus across the street and ride it bright and empty up the boulevard.

I am remembering, for some reason, the coast of Vietnam in springtime, flying north of the Delta, green headlands easing away and smoking, water close enough to see flying fish break surf and glitter sun-filled into the face of the next wave, the air after a summer storm: breathless, serene, empty.

The bus makes a stop and outside on the street corner a blind black woman taps her cane and rocks, singing an *a capella* blues. The driver looks out from his cubicle and back down the long aisle.

"Everything O.K.?" he asks me.

"Absolutely," I tell him. "Couldn't be better." □

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THE THOUSAND ISLANDS

Lynne Sharon Schwartz

Somewhere in the drift between sleep and waking, night and light, I heard a man call my name from far away, in a voice that meant I should come join him. It couldn't be my husband—he was lying beside me. I thought it sounded like my father, long dead. And I was afraid, because I can rarely resist the lure of a trip.

My mother used to tell me it was not good to ride the down escalator. She kept the reason mysterious—whether a superstition, or maybe a bizarre moral stricture, or a past disaster, I could never quite make out. In any event, we shouldn't take the risk. So in department stores we rode the escalator up and walked or took the elevator down. Later I learned it was something very personal she drew me into: simply that the down escalator made her dizzy and sick to her stomach. I never felt leery of escalators, nor of elevators in any ordinary, claustrophobic sense, but when I lived alone on the top floor of a tall building, I feared, while going down to the basement, that the elevator would not stop there but continue down, down to a subterranean region of eerie, phantasmagoric happenings, just as when Don Quixote is lowered into the cave of Montesinos and falls asleep to meet long-dead creatures dwelling in "enchanted solitudes" and enacting floridly romantic adventures. Even going back up, in the instant's pause between pushing the button and the elevator's ascent, my heart and brain again hung suspended as I waited to be transported to the earth's secret, exotic core, from which I too might wish never to return and might chide friends who hauled me up with ropes, for "robbing me of the sweetest existence and most delightful vision any human being ever enjoyed or beheld." The car always went up. Gasping in relief, I would shift my visions accordingly, and imagine that instead of stopping at the top floor it would continue on through the roof and sail aloft like a balloon, past this world in which every single thing was a boundary, to a region of open, dazzling spaces without logic or limits.

My mother never wearied of telling the story of her trip to Watertown, New York, before I was born. She had a seductive way of telling a story, a way that ensnared me in the filaments of her emotions and made me impatient for the time when such worldly adventures would happen to me. It was towards the end of the Depression, on the eve of war in Europe. My father had been fortunate enough to find a government job in Watertown, something to do with taxes. She stayed behind with my sister in her parents' house in Brooklyn, a brownstone with each floor given over to a daughter and her family. She seems to have considered it perfectly natural to stay behind with her parents, which is odd since in another part of her mind she believes a woman should go wherever her husband goes. Except, perhaps, to Watertown. My father would come into town every second or third weekend and on one of these visits he persuaded my mother to ride back part of the way with him, half an hour or so, no great risk, then he would drop her at a bus stop where she could catch a ride home. She gets into the car, leaving my sister in the care of the extended family, and after a time notices that they are out of the city, speeding along a highway. When she remarks on this, my father says he'll let her out in a while. Pretty soon she realizes they are far from the safety of Brooklyn, headed for Watertown.

"He kidnapped me," she would declare with pride and delight.

On the way to his rooming house, my father waved from the car window to a couple of his office mates passing on the street, and called out happily that his wife was paying him a visit. My mother found his landlady courteous enough, though a type she was not accustomed to—tight-lipped, chalky-faced, austere in a particular small-town fashion. While my father was off at work they chatted. Towards the close of the chat the landlady told my mother that she seemed to be a nice woman but that in Watertown nice women, though they might wear rouge and powder, did not wear lipstick. This amused my mother as a lesson in provinciality. Especially since as everyone in Brooklyn knew, lipstick was the most modest form of make-up, powder next, rouge next, mascara next, and eye-shadow the ultimate. Eye-liner was not yet used.

On the second day in Watertown, it was arranged that my mother would go downtown to meet my father for lunch. She started walking along the road he had indicated. Soon a car slowed alongside her; the driver honked and called to her to get in. She ignored him. For quite a while he tracked her, occasionally blowing the horn, but, a city girl, she steadfastly ignored him.

When she got to the office she told my father about the man who had tried to pick her up, then they went to lunch. In the restaurant my father greeted some people and introduced her. Imagine her surprise when one, looking puzzled, said, "I saw your wife walking to town. I figured she was coming to meet you and I wanted to give her a lift, but she wouldn't turn around." The very man they had passed on the street the day before!

Of course my mother was embarrassed. He had meant well, but how was she to have known? How to explain that in New York City a sensible woman never gets into a passing car with a stranger?

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I was conceived, legend has it, on the Watertown trip. Then my father brought her home to her parents' house.

There was another trip my parents made early in their married life, before I was born, that my mother liked to tell about. The Thousand Islands, in Canada. Even though my mother described the Thousand Islands in vague terms—peaceful, small old-fashioned houses, lots of water—she managed, with her talent for narrative and her candid face and expressive voice, to make them sound highly exotic, and thus they remain, the very name thrilling in its magnificent profusion. There too she met a landlady, who told her—my mother is sociable with strangers—that she had never seen Jews before and always believed, as she had been taught, that Jews had horns. My mother informed her, no doubt in the winning, candid manner I know well, that Jews assuredly did not have horns. From my mother's stories I sometimes confuse the two landladies, the horns and the lipstick, and the two trips, if indeed they were separate experiences: Watertown is very near the Thousand Islands, I have since learned. She talked about them so often, I imagine, because they were the only trips she ever took. I don't count the Catskill Mountains and Florida: those were not trips but transfers of the corporeal self in a car or an airplane in order to arrive at the same place but with better weather.

Before she was born, her parents traveled halfway round the world at great peril, and whether or not they told her about their travels, she, along with many in her generation, desired nothing more than to stay put where it was safe.

But I always yearned to go on exotic trips and nagged about it till at last, I must have been nine or ten, my mother said all right, we would go to the Thousand Islands. My outlook on life was transformed—I had something to live for other than the asphyxiating routine of school—and I began making lists, secret lists that I kept hidden in a nighttable drawer, of what I would take to the Thousand Islands: 2 pr. shorts, 2 bathing suits, 3 skirts (white w. belt, red print, pleated) . . . Every night I revised the secret lists—for, unlike my mother, I thrived, in secret, on secrecy—and copied them over, picturing myself in the various combinations of outfits, doing things on my secret agenda: ambling down foreign streets lined with picturesque cottages, or standing on a pier in the salt breeze, gazing over the rippling water dotted with hundreds of tiny gleaming islands. Sometimes I would ask my mother about the impending trip and she would retell her story about going there as a young woman, the landlady, the horns, and get a nostalgic look on her face which I interpreted as sweet longing and anticipation. But as weeks passed her responses grew vaguer and dismissive, till it dawned on me that there would be no Thousand Islands trip and I would never be packing the clothes on the lists. At first I thought the plans had fallen through for some adult reason, then with a kind of gradual shock I understood that there had never been any trip planned, she had said it only to placate me, to shut me up, as she did with five-minute spaghetti. When I was impatient for dinner she would sometimes tell me she was cooking a special type of spaghetti, five-minute spaghetti, and in fact those spaghetti meals did seem to materialize more quickly than most. Only when I was a teen-ager and began to go to supermarkets alone—for from as far back as I can remember, my mother shopped, pulling me along, in a tiny grocery with barely room to stand, where she had to ask the waddling grocer to fetch each item, one by one, which revelation of our family's intimate tastes and needs seemed a violation of privacy—did I learn there was no such thing as five-minute spaghetti. I was mortified, not so much on account of having been duped, but to think that my hunger—evidently an urgent, abandoned, exposed, unseemly lust—required such strategies.

I forgot about my secret lists and when I found them a few years later, under a pile of new secret lists and agendas in the nighttable drawer, I studied them with contempt—7 pr. socks, sneakers, white sndls.—and tore them up. There would come a time, I thought vengefully, when I could go to the Thousand Islands by myself, and not need to beg anyone to take me.

One summer afternoon I went on an excursion with a man I knew. I was going away soon on a long trip, and we wanted to spend one unfettered, leisurely afternoon together. He said he knew a place in the country, an old friend's house on a lake; the friend was away. He picked me up on a street corner in his car—I knew him well so it was all right to get in. But when we arrived we found the friend's brother there. We were all very civilized and pretended this was not a tryst, and as we sat on the porch overlooking the lake, eating sandwiches and drinking iced tea, we discussed the troubled politics of the Middle East, where none of us had ever been. After a while the friend's brother excused himself to do some paper work inside and urged us to enjoy the lake and the house, to make ourselves at home. We swam and lay on the wooden dock in the hot sun, where he caressed my back, and just from that simple motion and from the absurdity of the situation we reached such a pitch of excitement that he wanted to make love then and there, but I couldn't do that right in the middle of a lake with cottages around it, so we went inside to a downstairs bedroom, tearing off our wet suits recklessly and barely in time to fit ourselves together in some frenzied slapdash fashion. Later we told the friend's brother, all of us with composed faces, that we had had a nice swim and a nap, thanked him, and drove back to the city to resume our workaday lives.

Some time later my husband went on a weekend camping trip that wasn't really that, a trip he said he needed for solitude and an imprecise sort of spiritual refreshment which I, of all people, would not dream of challenging—nor of joining him on, not being a camper. He carefully, almost ostentatiously, unearthed supplies like hiking boots and a canteen. Months after, when I found out that the trip had not really been a camping trip—what could I, of all people, say? I would not have been altogether devastated, except for one thing. He had borrowed my knapsack for the trip. "Do you mind if I take your blue knapsack?" he asked, the night before he left, and I shrugged and said, "Sure." That still rankles, that my knapsack was a witness, kidnapped, and on top of

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that he really didn't need a knapsack (or a canteen) in the city. I don't even like to think of why he did that, even less than I like to think of how mortified and disillusioned I was when I learned, after so many years, that there was no such thing as five-minute spaghetti. But these are earnest, candid people. It was probably nothing despicably complicated, just for verisimilitude, and again to placate me and any (non-existent) anxiety or suspicion.

So I became a well-traveled person (though never to the Thousand Islands—I have lost that urge), but unlike my mother, I rarely entertain or lure with travel stories. Nor do I tell about the lists of things to take along the next time and the agendas of things to accomplish. I would never have done a thing like that, taking the knapsack. Not simply because I would not run such risks, fully as mysterious as the risk of the down escalator. But because secrecy has its own proprieties, utterly unknown to those earnest candid people who have to snare others in their travels, who cannot travel alone. □

ELIZABETH LIBBEY

DEPRESSION WINDFALL

There shouldn't be men in the orchard.
I don't like it: my husband away, the dogs off
running deer: they'll get shot for it one day.
And where is what's-her-name, Lily,
the new cook? Gone to the wine cellar, I suppose,
for another lengthy stay.
Perhaps they're men hungry
with no work, taking where they can. Foraging.
There's a lot of it these days. What kind
of apple, I wonder, might a man most willingly
eat despite the pains of an empty stomach
plaguing him?

Perhaps by now Lily's taken out Dom Perignon
on my silver tray. Ragged men seated
in an orderly circle as if awaiting tea
at the parlor table, while Lily hands them,
each in his turn, a long-stemmed crystal goblet
from Italy. No sound save
corks popping.
The apples dropping.

I've always believed in the But
of Mr. Roosevelt's Walk Softly. My father's
baseball bat should do. Just the other
side of the wall there's great shuffling, I'd guess
sixteen or twenty of them. And not a word, not
one hasty crunch of teeth breaking apple skin.
I admire their manners. I'll tell them,
Take what you have. Just leave.
I slip the latch
and push the gate to. Its hinges creak.
The shuffle stops. And there they are: ten
wild turkeys. They stare my way, then get back
to work, necks snaking, dinosaur heads
plucking at hundreds of apples nested in the dry grass.
A McIntosh or two roll off down the slope. Not
a man in sight. Only turkeys all moving
one way at once, then turning the other like a tide.

Well, at last they weave off loose-winged
on the trail of runaway Winesaps. Their legs don't
want to work together, their feet get tangled
in each other: hard cider on the stem,
is now on the talon as well.
I pick up a Rome,
balance it in my hand. Perfect to practice
my homerun swing. The things one learns when
not expecting to. Another and another, I toss them
high, lob them into the trees. More apples fall.

And the turkeys? For all their team spirit,
still not much good for anything but table.
Occasional heads bob among the trees.
I keep hitting: the ripest apples split, there's
the sweet smell of apple on ashwood.
I hit on
into the dusk until Lily, her little white doily
cap askew, announces at the gate officially,
Madam, the dogs is back. The Mister's home.
Foraging, I find in the grass, Winesap nestled
like an easter egg. I bite down.
This evening, I'll
demand Dom Perignon. My husband will eye me
curiously. What did you do today? he'll ask.
Same old thing, I'll answer, picking up
my needlepoint: rooting for the home team.

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THE WOMAN QUESTION:

1. Suffrage

26 (October 1879) The Woman Question, *by Francis Parkman*

29 (April 1849) *From* Female Poets, *by Mrs. E.F. Ellet*

33 (February 1893) *From* Science and the Woman Question, *by Lydia Lvovna Pimenoff*

35 (November 1879) Responses, *by Julia Ward Howe, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Lucy Stone, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton*

46 (June 1894) Woman Suffrage in Practice, *by Davis H. Waite and Lorenzo Crounse*

49 (September 1895) Why Woman Do Not Want the Ballot, *by William Croswell Doane*

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FRANCIS PARKMAN

The Woman Question

1879

The nineteenth century will be the riddle of history. With its universal activity and universal restlessness, currents and counter-currents, progress and reaction; now assailing old faiths, and now patching their venerable battlements to make itself a den there; now proclaiming the religion of science, now prone before the Vatican, and now groveling in prehistoric superstition; attacking the foundations of modern society; denouncing mediaevalism and borrowing its rusty tools to build a new order of things—this nineteenth century, among its heterogeneous progeny has brought one to light that the world has not seen for many a day. The demand that women shall take an active part in politics is not quite new. That marvelous people of antiquity, the richness of whose political experience matched the power and splendor of their intellectual and aesthetic achievement, were not strangers to this supposed product of modern democracy. It appeared at Athens in the time of Aristophanes, who mocks it with not over-delicate satire. Much has been talked and written about it; yet we beg to add a few words more. It involves the whole question of the relations of men and women.

One would think that the subject to which men have given their chief attention since the world began would by this time be tolerably well understood, and that little doubt would remain as to the nature, capacities, and position of women. Varieties of race, modes of life, degrees of barbarism or civilization, have modified their relations to the other sex and changed the estimate set upon them. But, while shading and coloring differ, the outlines remain the same, answering in the human race to those that rudely but plainly mark the relations of sex through all the orders of animated nature. Nevertheless, when one sees the vast changes for the better which have already taken place in the position of women, it is impossible not to hope that the future has still others in store. In what direction are we to look for them, and through what influences? These are questions on which those who have at heart the welfare of women, in other words of all humanity, have differed and will no doubt continue for a long time to differ. Let us hope that, in discussing them, the airs of benign mastery which naturally annoy women will be avoided on one side, and postures of antagonism on both. The two sexes are one, and their interests are the same.

The order of Nature is marked by a prevailing consistency. Over all her great fields of action, she is at one with herself, though irregularities and contradictions appear in special cases. Individual men and women are often inharmonious in physical or mental structure, but it is not so with men as a whole, or women as a whole. The typical man or woman is perfectly self-consistent. The one is made for conflict—whether the physical conflict of actual war, or that sometimes no less bitter and cruel, of the competitions of business and ambition. His greater stature and firmer muscles are matched with a sterner spirit, less tender sensibilities, and susceptible nerves, a ruder hardihood, and, in nearly all strongly masculine natures, with a certain remnant of primitive ferocity, which lies latent in the bosom of the highest civilizations and impels their male offspring to adventures of war, the chase, and travel in savage and perilous lands. In short, this fighting animal is well appointed for his work, whether to confront his enemy in deadly strife, or to battle in the interest of a purpose or an idea against cold, hunger, fatigue, want, obloquy, or hope deferred. And to these qualities of achievement, he joins, at least relatively, a mind governed rather by reason than emotion, and a deliberate and logical adaptation of means to ends.

There is equal harmony on the other side. Here, the whole nature corresponds to the rounded outlines and softer muscles of the physical frame. There is the same universal fitness to a purpose, but a widely different one. The susceptibilities that unfit the typical woman for rude conflict are joined to high and priceless qualities, without which life would be a curse. Not that men are incapable of equal moral elevation. In this respect we believe that men and women stand, in different attitudes, on about the same level. Nor, because, under the inspiration of passion, men have drawn ideal portraits of women in prose and verse, does it follow that women are superior to the other sex. Women have admired men as much as men have admired women; but their admiration has not found the same expression, by reason of that principle of universal nature which makes the man the wooer, and not the woman. The ideal woman is a very noble creature, and so is the ideal man; and this is not the less true because the ideal is not often realized in either case.

It has been pretended that the distinctive mental qualities of women are inherited from ages of oppression. Never was there a shallower fallacy. Whatever qualities of a woman are transmissible by inheritance, may descend to all her offspring alike. The male infant would be as apt to receive them as the female. The mental qualities of the latter are no more results of hereditary oppression than her bodily qualities. The supreme law of sex has decreed that the boys shall be boys and that the girls shall be girls. The natures of the two sexes are like the two electricities of the magnet. Each needs the other, and is drawn to the other; and as each is emphatically masculine or emphatically feminine, so is the strength of this mutual need.

The reciprocity between the two separate halves of

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human nature extends over a wide field, not only in passions and emotions, but in the regions of moral and intellectual life. Most intelligent men have felt the stimulus and refreshment of the faculties that spring from the companionship of an intelligent and congenial woman, and which is unlike anything resulting from the contact of a male mind. It is a fructifying power, with which neither the world of thought nor the world of action could well dispense. Many men of the higher sort recall as an epoch in their lives that wonderful awakening of energies, ambitions, and aspirations which comes with the first consciousness of the influence of the other sex. Sometimes the change amounts to revolution in character, and the young man can hardly recognize himself in the boy of two or three years before. The influence that begins the awakening is powerful to maintain it. Hunger, thirst, the instinct of self-preservation, avarice, malice, envy, and other of the lower motive forces, are self-sustaining. But, excepting those that belong to the province of religion, the nobler desires and energies draw impulse and aliment from the principle of sex. Truth itself would seem hardly worth the pursuit if women were not in the world.

This principle of sexual reciprocity, reigning through all organized nature, except its lowest forms, widening and strengthening as the scale of being rises, and culminating at last in man, more intense and more comprehensive in him as he is more highly and variously endowed than the creatures beneath him—this principle is the most pervading among the forces of human life. Its degrees of power over individuals are almost infinitely various, but the whole race is more or less in subjection to it, or to the influences that rise out of it. Other forces may outrival it in different persons at different times, but none of them has the same character of universality, and none is so prolific in results of all kinds, for evil and for good. It is the spring of the chief pleasures and the chief pains of life. It fires the noblest ambitions, and, misplaced or abused, becomes the source of unspeakable degradation.

What we are to observe is, that this imperial and all-essential power is founded not on resemblances but on differences of nature and function. These differences are so great that it may be doubted if men and women can ever quite understand each other. Women have a nice perception of male psychology in certain phases of life and character; but there are regions of masculine nature in which their perception is exceedingly faint and dim, because there is nothing that answers to them in their own consciousness; and no doubt the same holds good of men in their comprehension of women. It is true that the differences between the sexes are not uniform in degree. There are masculine women and feminine men. But when the two thus resemble each other, it is, for the most part, rather through defects than positive qualities. A woman is called masculine oftener because she lacks womanliness than because she possesses manliness; and a man is called feminine oftener because he lacks manliness than because he possesses womanliness. There are men who, through defects of nature, are indifferent to the society of women; and there are women equally so to the society of men. But the ocean rolls and surges, though in lazy nooks and quiet bays the waters lie unruffled, unconscious and incredulous of the turmoil without.

It has been said that the question of the rights and employment of women should be treated without regard to sex. Mr. Wendell Phillips tells us that all those who so treat it are "high-minded," and all the others "low-minded." It should rather be said that those who consider it regardless of sex do not consider it at all. It will not do to exclude from the problem the chief factor in it, and deal with women only as if they were smaller and weaker men. Yet these have been the tactics of the agitators for female suffrage, and to them they mainly owe what little success they have had. Hence their extreme sensitiveness whenever the subject is approached on its most essential side. If it could be treated like other subjects, and discussed fully and freely, the cause of the self-styled reformers would have been hopeless from the first. It is happy for them that the relations of women to society can not be so discussed without giving just offense. Their most important considerations can be touched but slightly; and even then offense will be taken. It is only for us to see that it be not taken reasonably.

The immense disadvantages under which women are placed; the cruel hardship and injustice to which many of them are often subjected; the terrible and crushing penalties, sometimes grievously disproportioned to the real fault, to which they are liable; the misery and degradation of a numerous class, resulting in many cases more from circumstance than from intrinsic viciousness—all these taken together form the most perplexing and painful problem in human life. A remedy is looked for in a change of public opinion which shall visit the breach of chastity with equal condemnation in men and women. This remedy has long been urged, and probably at this moment there is in the world at large as little disposition to accept it as ever. There is nothing in the case of men in the slightest degree answering to these penalties imposed on women, except the contempt and disgrace with which every spirited people visits a display of cowardice. Fear, or the yielding to it, is great shame in a man, and none at all in a woman. But the cases are not parallel, for a man can retrieve lost honor, and a woman can not. Whence arise

"...Because, under the inspiration of passion, men have drawn ideal portraits of women in prose and verse, [it does not] follow that women are superior to the other sex. . . . The ideal woman is a very noble creature, and so is the ideal man. . ."

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the different values attached to the same virtue in men and women, and why has every attempt to make them equal signally failed? The difference is due to the structure of civilized society, which, on both its political and its social side, is built on the family. Women, and not men, are of necessity the guardians of the integrity of the family and the truth of succession, with all the interests of affection, of maintenance, and of inheritance involved in them. Hence the virtue in question is far more important in them than in men. Some savage or barbarous peoples have evaded the difficulty by refusing to recognize the father at all in the question of kinship. When the whole system of lineage is traced through the woman alone, the reason for imposing special penalties upon her ceases, for her children must always be legitimate. This remedy, which exempts the father from any obligation to support his children if he does not choose to do so, can belong only to a low state of barbarism, though a practical adoption of it has lately been proposed, professedly in the interest of women. Nations less barbarous have tried to secure the object by constant watching and restriction, sometimes amounting to actual slavery. European civilization uses better and more effective means. It establishes a standard of honor, and trusts women to conform to it. In this they are generally aided by more delicate sensibilities, by passivity of temperament, and by being protected from the countless temptations that beset every man who mingles much with the world. Nor to him is the temptation from within less than those from without. To impose the same penalties on him that are imposed on a woman would not only be without the same necessity, but would be a far greater hardship.

Whatever liberty the best civilization may accord to women, they must always be subject to restrictions unknown to the other sex, and they can never dispense with the protecting influences which society throws about them. A man, in lonely places, has nothing to lose but life and property; and he has nerve and muscles to defend them. He is free to go whither he pleases, and run what risks he pleases. Without a radical change in human nature, of which the world has never given the faintest sign, women can not be equally emancipated. It is not a question of custom, habit, or public opinion; but of an all-pervading force, always formidable in the vast number of men in whom it is not controlled by higher forces. A woman is subject, also, to many other restrictions, more or less stringent, necessary to the maintenance of self-respect and the respect of others, and yet placing her at a disadvantage, as compared to men, in the active work of the world. All this is mere truism, but the plainest truism may be ignored in the interest of a theory or a "cause."

Again, everybody knows that the physical and mental constitution of woman is more delicate than in the other sex; and, we may add, the relations between mind and body more intimate and subtile. It is true that they are abundantly so in men; but their harder organism is neither so sensitive to disturbing influences nor subject to so many of them.

It is these and other inherent conditions, joined to the engrossing nature of a woman's special functions, that have determined through all time her relative position. What we have just said—and we might have said much more—is meant as a reminder that her greatest limitations are not of human origin. Men did not make them, and they can not unmake them. Through them, God and Nature have ordained that those subject to them shall not be forced to join in the harsh conflicts of the world militant. It is folly to ignore them, or try to counteract them by political and social quackery. They set at naught legislatures and peoples.

Notwithstanding limitations on one side and comparative freedom on the other, it would not be safe to say that the allotment of happiness to the two sexes is unequal. The life of men, like that of women, has its own hardships—the deadly strain of fierce competition, exhaustion without possibility of rest, heavy responsibilities, agonies of suspense and ruin. Aside from the low state of health of women in some civilized countries, and in America above all, it is likely that, on the whole, they have about the same share as men in the enjoyment of life. It is among those who have no part in the occupations and duties of the rest of their sex that one is most apt to find that morbid introversion, those restless cravings, that vague but torturing sense of destinies unfulfilled, and activities without an object, which rarely receive much pity, but perhaps deserve it as much as any of the more positive woes. There is no misery like the misery of vacuum. But among all the causes of female unhappiness, and involving and aggravating all the rest, there is none more fruitful of tribulation than ill health, which, in American women, brings with it disabilities equal, probably, to all the rest together. If our women are to rise to the height of their capacities, the first and indispensable requisite is physical regeneration.

It is the interest of men in general that women should reach their best development, just as it is the interest of individual men that those with whom they associate should be refined, instructed, intelligent, and high-minded. The question is only of means.

There is a universal law of growth and achievement. The man who knows himself, understands his own powers and aptitudes, forms purposes in accord with them, and pursues these purposes steadily, is the man of success. He who takes no account of his own nature, makes his will the father of his thought, shuts his eyes to unwelcome truths, places himself in false positions, and turns from the good within his reach to strain after the unattainable, is predestined to vexation and failure. Every one has his place in the world, and the wise and fortunate find it. As it is with men, so, in a measure, it is with women; and as it is with men and women as individuals, so it is with men as a whole, and women as a whole. One must make Nature an ally and not an enemy, for the strife is unequal. The palm will not grow in the soil and climate of the pine.

Most metaphors express more or less than the truth; and so does this. Between the life for which men alone are fit and that for which women alone are fit there lies a region where both may prosper. They may pursue the same objects, though seldom in precisely the same way, or with exactly the same results. In some employments women, with equal application and persistency, would certainly have an advantage. We do not mean to consider the relative intellectual power of the sexes. It is enough

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for our purpose to remember that the faculties of the two are exercised under different physical and moral conditions, which modify their action.

It is often and most justly said that the intellectual growth of the country bears no proportion to its material progress. The drift toward pursuits called practical is so strong that it carries with it nearly all the best male talent. The rush and whirl of business catches the men as in a maelstrom, and, if it sharpens and invigorates some of their powers, it dwarfs others, and narrows the mental horizon. Women are free from these disadvantages. Many of them have abundant leisure and opportunities of culture better than the best within the reach of men on this continent forty years ago. Their sex is itself a power if they use it rightly. They can, if they will, create and maintain higher standards of thought and purpose, raise the whole tone of national life, and give our civilization the fullness that it lacks; for, if they raise themselves, they will infallibly raise the men with them. But they will not do it by frothy declamation on platforms, or flooding the bookstalls with sensation stories, any more than by those other trivialities which professional female reformers denounce. Nor will they do it by trying to forget that they are women.

There is a strange want of dignity in the attitude of some of these reformers toward the question of the relations of their sex to society. Instead of claiming for them what is theirs, a nature of their own, with laws of its own, and a high capacity of independent development, they propose, as the aim of their ambition, the imitation of men. The position in which they try to place women may be said to answer to that of a colony to its metropolis; a provincialism which can not disappear till the colony learns the nature of its own worth, and accepts the conditions of its own vitality. Till then, its attitude is a continual admission of inferiority.

There is no country in which women enjoy such large and various liberty as with us; but it would be bold to say that American women, as a whole, are superior to those of other leading nations. In spite of their advantages, a vast proportion of them fall immeasurably short of the influence and consideration that ought to belong to them. We would by no means be understood to intimate that this is a consequence of liberty. It proceeds from a variety of causes, some of which act injuriously on men also; and foremost among them is an overstrained and morbid activity, an incessant tension of nerves, bred partly by climate, but incomparably more by the peculiar social conditions of a country where all kinds of competition, spurred by all kinds of stimulus, keep mind and body always on the stretch. The men feel them in the struggles of active life; the women in the ambitions, anxieties, and worries of a social existence, where emulation prevails from the highest to the lowest. And they, as the more susceptible and more easily deranged, suffer more than the men.

To reach the best results there must be a harmony and balance between body and mind, which can only come by giving its due exercise to each. In an athlete, who devotes his life to nothing but athletics, the muscles and sinews thrive at the expense of the mental faculties; but, in a man or woman whose brain is overwrought, whether by impor-

from
Female Poets of America
MRS. E. F. ELLET
1849

The profusion of poetry published nowadays is a subject of general remark. Some are disposed to regard it as a discouraging symptom for the prospects of American literature, as tending to lower the standard of merit and take away the stimulus of ambition: others, on the contrary, augur well from it, as showing that there exists a widely spread aspiration after the poetical, with a steady improvement in taste, and a corresponding elevation in the range of art. And truly there is something of compensating advantage in the assurance that the sense of beauty is nourished by these frequent delineations of a more vivid life, and that we can perceive a rapid development of that instinctive perception of the relation of external things to thought and emotion, which is essential to the existence of poetry. There is also encouragement in the evident fact, that the spontaneous utterance in verse of ideas, feelings, and opinions has become a habit with us. The newspapers throughout the country afford abundant proof of this, especially at periods when popular excitement prevails on any subject; and the fact is the more remarkable, as the cultivation of poetry as an art cannot be made profitable.

Perhaps the fairest index to a knowledge of national character and tendency may be found in the habits and tastes of the women; and when a large number of these are engaged in literary pursuits, we can measure our progress, and form some estimate of what is to be expected in literature. The less absorbing nature of female occupations is favorable to wanderings through the gardens of the imagination and the fancy. In seclusion, too, reflections and emotions spring up, that naturally seek expression; while the fair poet is freely encouraged by the example of others to make her pen the exponent of her feelings. Thus, taking into view the finer susceptibility and more ready sympathies of woman, which dispose her to find enjoyment in the creations of art, it is not surprising that the spirit and feeling of the times, at different periods, should be reflected in the writings of women more than in those of men. In the dark days of the Revolution, female eloquence and female satire aided the patriots; and now, the brightest flowers of poetry are twined around the shrine of the domestic affections. And while poetry receives its tone from the prevalent temper of the period, taking the tone of what it illustrates and adorns, it wields in its turn a powerful influence, infusing into the heart a love of the highest truth and beauty, and invigorating with new energy the life which it is its province to embellish.

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"It is. . .wrong, that a small number of women should impose on all the rest political duties which. .they do not want to assume, and which. . .would be a cruel and intolerable burden."

tant matters or by trifles, the body suffers without profit to the mind; for the abused physical nature quickly reacts on the mental, and both are impaired together. Worn as so many of our women are by this morbid action and reaction of body and mind, it is impossible for them to reach that full womanhood than which the world has nothing more beneficent or more noble.

In this condition of things, what do certain women demand for the good of their sex? To add to the excitements that are wasting them other and greater excitements, and to cares too much for their strength other and greater cares. Because they can not do their own work, to require them to add to it the work of men, and launch them into the turmoil where the most robust sometimes fail. It is much as if a man in a state of nervous exhaustion were told by his physician to enter at once for a foot-race or a boxing-match.

This brings us to our object, the consideration of the movement for female suffrage. It has been claimed as a right that women should vote. It is no right, but a wrong, that a small number of women should impose on all the rest political duties which there is no call for their assuming, which they do not want to assume, and which, if duly discharged, would be a cruel and intolerable burden. This pretense of the female suffragists was reduced to an absurdity when some of them gravely affirmed that, if a single woman wanted to vote, all the others ought to be required to do so.

Government by doctrines of abstract right, of which the French Revolution set the example and bore the fruits, involves enormous danger and injustice. No political right is absolute and of universal application. Each has its conditions, qualifications, and limitations. If these are disregarded, one right collides with another, or with many others. Even a man's right to liberty is subject to the condition that he does not use it to infringe the rights of his neighbors. It is in the concrete, and not in the abstract, that rights prevail in every sound and wholesome society. They are applied where they are applicable. A government of glittering generalities quickly destroys itself. The object of government is the accomplishment of a certain result, the greatest good of the governed; and the ways of reaching it vary in different countries and different social conditions. Neither liberty nor the suffrage are the end; they are nothing but means to reach it; and each should be used to the extent in which it is best adapted to its purpose. If the voting of women conduces to the greatest good of the community, then they ought to vote, and otherwise they ought not. The question of female suffrage thus becomes a practical question, and not one of declamation.

High civilization, ancient or modern, has hitherto rested on the family. The family, and not the individual, has been the political unit, and the head of the family, *in esse* or *in posse,* actual or prospective, has been the political representative of the rest. To give the suffrage to women would be to reject the principle that has thus far formed the basis of civilized government.

It is said, and incessantly repeated, that the influence of women has kept even pace with the growth of civilization. As respects direct political influence, this is certainly untrue. In former times, and under low social conditions, women have occasionally had a degree of power in public affairs unknown in the foremost nations of the modern world. The most savage tribe on this continent listened, in solemn assembly, to the counsels of its matrons, with a deference that has no parallel among its civilized successors. The people of ancient Lycia, at a time when they were semi-barbarians, gave such power to their women that they were reported to live under a gynecocracy, or female government. The word gynecocracy, by the way, belongs to antiquity. It has no application in modern life; and, in the past, its applications were found, not in the higher developments of ancient society, but in the lower. In the splendid civilization of Athens, women held a very subordinate place. In the France of two centuries and more ago, they had a share of political power greater than at any time since, though France had not then mounted to her full height.

A certain benign influence, indefinite and almost mystical in character, has been ascribed to "woman," which, it is proclaimed, will purify our politics. That, in some relations of life, the instincts of women are preëminently delicate and true; that in them the moral nature and the better emotions are more apt to rule than in the other sex; that their conscience is more sensitive, and their religious susceptibilities quicker and more controlling—is, happily, not to be denied; but they are no whit less human than men. Like them, they have "the defects of their qualities," and the very delicacy and impressibility of their mental and moral structure give efficacy to these defects. There are circumstances under which they rarely appear to advantage, or avail much for good.

There are some means of judging from experience whether they are likely to exert, in public life, the beneficent power ascribed to them. Many countries of Europe have been governed by queens, and this at a time when to wear a crown meant to hold a dominant power. According to the theory, these female reigns ought to have shown more virtuous and benign government than is generally

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found under the rule of men. The facts do not answer to the expectation. Isabella of Castile was full of amiable qualities, but she permitted herself to be made the instrument of diabolical religious persecution. Catharine II. of Russia was one of the ablest women who ever held a scepter, and one of the most profligate. Maria Theresa of Austria was in many respects far above the common level; but she was a sharer in what has been called the greatest of political crimes—the partition of Poland. That outrage was the work of three accomplices, two women and a man—the Empress of Russia, the Archduchess of Austria, and the King of Prussia. The reign of Henry IV. of France was one of the most beneficent in history. His first queen was a profligate and his second a virago, gravely suspected of having procured his assassination in collusion with her lover. The last wife of Louis XIV. was discreet and devout, but she favored the dragonnades, and called her brother to share the spoils of those atrocious persecutions. A throng of matchless statesmen, soldiers, philosophers, and poets made the reign of Elizabeth of England brilliant and great. It was adorned by the high and courageous spirit of the Queen, and sullied by her meanness, jealousy, and inordinate vanity. Mary of England lives in the memory of her bloody persecutions. Mary of Scotland was the thorn of her kingdom. Her fascinations have outlived three centuries, and so have her tumults of unbridled love and the dark suspicion of crime that rests upon her. The queenmother of Charles IX. of France fomented, if she did not cause, the frightful massacre of St. Bartholomew, and surrounded herself with a band of beautiful and unscrupulous girls, whose charms she used systematically as means of political influence. There have been many bad kings, many indifferent ones, and a few who have earned the gratitude of all time. Many women have worn crowns, but we look among them in vain for one of those royal benefactors of the race. Not that women have less power for good than men. In some circumstances they have more. Their desire of good is often intense; but this desire has not been best fulfilled in the field of politics.

Besides queens, women in less eminent stations have sometimes had great political influence. This was never more true than in France at the middle of the seventeenth century, when the wives and daughters of the high nobility played a remarkable part in the politics of the day. The sagacious and able De Retz, who lived in the midst of these events, and took an important part in them, had unrivaled opportunities of studying women in their political character. His judgment is that they were very adroit in managing the strings of a party intrigue, but failed on great questions of policy. Two other points are prominent at this time: First, the action of these political ladies always had a personal bearing, and turned about some man or men from motives of love, predilection, jealousy, or schemes of alliance; secondly, with a few exceptions, they used their own charms, or those of other women, as means of gaining political advantages, and this without scruple, and sometimes without shame. Instead of purifying politics, they corrupted them.

Finally—and this instance, if it yields an argument to only half the country, yields it to the half that alone has need of it—the women of the South were more ardent for secession and slavery than the men; and, when the men knew that the cause was lost, their weaker partners refused to yield. Fighting was useless; but fair lips still cried, "Fight on!" It was the action of those two very different qualities—a woman's will and a man's resolution. The one can be argued with, and the other can not. The one is subject to reason; this other sees nothing but the object on which its heart is set, and strains after it in the teeth of ruin. Not that one does not continually meet women entirely reasonable in their aims, and in their pursuit of them; but this intractable element of "a woman's will" will have to be accounted with whenever the sex enters the lists of active politics.

Shakespeare gives a superb illustration of these two qualities, or rather of one of them. An intense desire possesses Lady Macbeth, and masters her whole being. A crown glitters before her eyes, and, as she gazes on it, fear, conscience, loyalty, the sacred law of hospitality, are all forgotten. The vehemence of her longing bears her on like a fate. Her husband hesitates, divided between duty and ambition. She taunts him with fear, and his admirable answer—

> "I dare do all that may become a man;
> Who dares do more is none"—

is wholly lost upon her. He yields; the deed is done, and the prize seized. Then come the avenging furies. She pines and dies under the tortures of the mind, while the sterner nature lives on, to perish at last by the sword, fighting with fierce desperation against the retributive doom.

This impetuous property of feminine nature, no doubt, may have its use at times. When a people is afflicted by some overwhelming evil, to be thrown off at any risk or sacrifice, then a one-idea vehemence of attack is not out of place. Such modes of attack are not confined to women. Ardent philanthropic reformers have commonly shown feminine characteristics, and assumed corresponding attitudes toward the objects of their zeal. But, useful as men of this stamp are in exceptional emergencies of a certain kind, the habitual reformer is generally a nuisance when he tries to deal with the broad and many-sided questions involved in the government of nations. These demand qualities widely different from his; and, as the foundation of them all, the essentially masculine one of justice.

One of the chief dangers of popular government is that of inconsiderate and rash legislation. In impatience to be rid of one evil, ulterior consequences are apt to be forgotten. In the haste to redress one wrong, a door may be opened to many. This danger would be increased immeasurably if the most impulsive and excitable half of humanity had an equal voice in the making of laws. And, in the administration of them, abstract right would then be made to prevail after a fashion somewhat startling. A lady of intelligence and admirable intentions, an ardent partisan on principles of pure humanitarianism, confessed that, in the last Presidential election, Florida had given a majority for the Democrats; but insisted that it was right to count it for Hayes, because other States had been counted wrongfully for Tilden. It was impossible to make her comprehend that government conducted on such

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principles would end in anarchy. In politics, the virtues of women would sometimes be as dangerous as their faults.

But it is not their virtues that we should see in the dust and scramble of the political arena. As, when white sand is mingled with black, the black is drawn to the magnet and the white is left behind, so the coarse and contentious among women would be drawn to politics by a sort of elective affinity. Those of finer sensibilities and more delicate scruples would remain in more congenial climates, and the law of natural selection would rule in all its force. The great majority of the sex would employ themselves in the duties which must be discharged so long as the world goes on, and distract themselves as little as might be with primary meetings, canvasses, conventions, and election campaigns. It has been said, and too truly, that the best men shun politics. Their endless complication, the innumerable wires that guide their machinery, and the dexterity required to work it, give to the practiced trickster who has made them his trade an advantage over far abler men who have not. The system of spoils draws hungry and rapacious crowds to choke incessantly the highways and by-ways of the public service, and the brevity and uncertainity of the tenure of office make it certain that those most fit for it will least care to accept it. If these and other causes have deterred the best men from taking part in active politics, they would deter the best women far more. All that is repulsive to the one would be incomparably more so to the other. If politics are to be purified by artfulness, effrontery, insensibility, a pushing self-assertion, and a glib tongue, then we may look for regeneration; for the typical female politician will be richly endowed with all these gifts.

Thus accoutered for the conflict, she may fairly hope to have the better of her masculine antagonist. A woman has the inalienable right of attacking without being attacked in turn. She may strike but must not be struck, either literally or figuratively. Most women refrain from abusing their privilege of non-combatants; but there are those in whom the sense of impunity breeds the cowardly courage of the virago, and makes the tongue more terrible than the sword. A man's tongue is strong only as the organ of reason or eloquence; but a woman's is a power in itself. During some angry party debate, the future House of Representatives will present an animated scene when, in or out of order, the female members take the floor.

In reckoning the resources of the female politicians, there is one which can by no means be left out. None know better than women the potency of feminine charms aided by feminine arts. The woman "inside politics" will not fail to make use of an influence so subtile and strong, and of which the management is peculiarly suited to her talents. If—and the contingency is in the highest degree probable—she is not gifted with charms of her own, she will have no difficulty in finding and using others of her sex who are. If report is to be trusted, Delilah has already spread her snares for the Congressional Samson; and the power before which the wise fail and the mighty fall has been invoked against the sages and heroes of the Capitol. When "woman" is fairly "inside politics," the sensation press will reap a harvest of scandals more lucrative to itself than profitable to public morals. And, as the zeal of one class of female reformers has been, and no doubt will be, largely directed to their grievances in matters of sex, we shall have shrill-tongued discussions of subjects which had far better be let alone.

It may be said that the advocates of female suffrage do not look to political women for the purifying of politics, but to the votes of the sex at large. The two, however, can not be separated. It should be remembered that the question is not of a limited and select female suffrage, but of a universal one. To limit would be impossible. It would seek the broadest areas and the lowest depths, and spread itself through the marshes and malarious pools of society. Those instincts that dart to their goal while the reason of man gropes and wanders; that love of the good and the beautiful which is to soothe the raging waters, and guide their currents in ways of peace and right—these belong to the chosen of their sex alone; and, even in them, it may be doubted whether they would find profitable exercise in American politics. Faith is indispensable to all achievement; but it must not quarrel with common sense, nor walk with eyes shut. If it does, it will lead not to success, but to disaster. Now, the most ardent faith, if joined with common sense and the faintest knowledge of human nature, will fail to discern in the great mass of the female sex any promise of purer and wiser government. Women, as a whole, have less sense of political responsibility than men. For this there are various reasons, but one will suffice. They have shared very imperfectly in the traditions, and not at all in the practice of self-government. The men of free countries have been trained to a sense of political responsibility by long striving for political rights, the memory of which has acted as a continual education, special to one sex because the other has had neither the will nor the opportunity to share it. By slow progress in the acquisition of these rights, they have acquired a consciousness of their value, some knowledge of the conditions on which they rest, and the skill to use them. In the freest countries, and our own among the rest, there are large numbers of men who have not received this training, have never learned the art of self-government, and can not share in it without injury and danger to the state. Women as a whole may be said to be in the condition of persons devoid of this training, and of the sense of politi-

"Women, as a whole, have less sense of political responsibility than men, [for] they have shared very imperfectly in the traditions, and not at all in the practice of self-government."

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from SCIENCE AND THE WOMAN'S QUESTION (1893) by Lydia Lvovna Pimenoff

The claim of equal rights for women has been attacked from various points of vantage. We have had the aesthetic argument, the religious argument, the philosophical argument, and the political argument. Yet all these are merely beatings about the bush—they do not touch the kernel of the subject. They are, moreover, as unworthy of reply as were the opponents whom Frederick the Great meant when he uttered the apothegm in military tactics: "Never haggle with the enemy's light infantry."

If, then, sex means simply division of labor, and not subordination of man to woman, or of woman to man, whence came the disabilities under which women have suffered in the past, and how, if they are still to be the mothers, the child-rearers, the home-keepers of the race, do they look forward to the complete removal of these disabilities? We shall prepare ourselves for the reply to this question if we bear in mind that the so-called inequality of woman in the past has been no real inferiority, but merely a temporary subordination due to the maternal function, and to the relation of that function to social conditions. We shall find, moreover, at the very threshold of our inquiry, that the extent to which the function of motherhood absorbs the energies of woman has varied with the social state; that improvement of such state has set free for non-maternal activities an ever-increasing amount of such energies, and that woman reaches the true expression of her equality with man just as fast as the race becomes civilized.

Sociologists are agreed that the position of woman, even as a mother, has been largely determined by the stage of development reached by society. Generally speaking, the militant condition goes hand in hand with the subjection of women; in other words, where the tribal group or nation is constantly engaged in the activities of war, there the mothers must occupy an inferior position, and must undergo all the disabilities of that position. It is not that in the fighting stage women are oppressed by men, but it is that both men and women have their status determined by the character of the prevailing civilization. On the other hand, progress from the militant to the industrial type of society is, generally speaking, accompanied by the gradual emancipation of women from such subjection, and the gradual recognition of her equality with man.

The passing away of international warfare not only relaxes the subordination of woman in the way indicated, but sets free some of the energies of the mother for activities other than those which are maternal and domestic. Simultaneously with the advent of the industrial state and the diversion of minds from the acts of war to those of peace, there come numerous occupations in which women find it possible to engage. The new social condition, in fact, works a complete change in the attitude of women towards extra-domestic employments. In a fighting state they are compelled to regard marriage as their only means of livelihood, and this is still true of the great majority of women in the militant societies of Europe; but in the industrial state they cease to be thus limited. There is the further result that non-militant, industrial life gives woman those opportunities of mental development which ages of exclusive subjection to the duties of the household have denied her. In the industrial field, under the freer conditions of the non-militant state, she has already—in the United States, for example—utilized these opportunities in the development, not only of great industrial expertness, but also of remarkable intellectual power.

cal responsibility that grows out of it, excepting a minority composed of the more thoughtful, who have acquired it by education, conscientiousness, and association with the better sort of men. But the vast majority have little or none of it; and hence, if they are to be admitted at all to a share in public affairs, they should be admitted very gradually. We say nothing here of those differences of nature that have hitherto in all ages, countries, and races, made men the governing half of the race. What we urge is, that now and for generations to come, woman as a whole must of necessity come into politics far less prepared for them than men as a whole. Large masses now vote who are unprepared to vote. The unprepared women are incomparably more numerous, and in many of them the want of preparation is complete and absolute. This is the condition of nearly all those in the lower strata of society. We shall of course be told that they must go into the water before they can learn to swim; but what is proposed is not to teach them to swim: it is to throw them all at once into a fathomless ocean, where they will drown themselves, and pull down those who were swimming there, or trying to swim before them.

A French statesman once said that, against a mob of women, the Government is entirely helpless. There are no means of repression. Bullets, bayonets, sabers, and grapeshot are out of the question. And yet, in the French Revolution, female mobs were fiercer and more destructive than those of men. To give women the suffrage is to expose the most excitable part of the human race to the influence of political passions with no means of defense against possible consequences. A body of legislators coerced by a female mob would be in a position as pitiable as ridiculous. There are those who think that the suffrage would act as a safety-valve to political passions; but it has not so acted in the case of men. Dissatisfied masses, foiled of their purpose at the polls, are more apt to resort to force than if they had not already tried lawful means without success. The bloody riots of 1877 were the work of men in full enjoyment of the suffrage. It is to the dread of lead and steel that the friends of order must look in the last resort; and, when this does not exist, political frenzy will have its way.

If the better class of women flatter themselves that they can control the others, they are doomed to disap-

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pointment. They will be outvoted in their own kitchens, without reckoning the agglomerations of poverty, ineptitude, and vice that form a startling proportion of our city populations. It is here that the male vote alone threatens our system with its darkest perils. The female vote would enormously increase the evil, for it is often more numerous, always more impulsive, and less subject to reason; and, through causes which we gave above, almost devoid of the sense of responsibility. Here the bad politician would find his richest resources. He could not reach the better class of female voters, but the rest would be ready to his hand. Many women will sell themselves; many more would sell their votes. Three fourths of them, when not urged by some pressing need or contagious passion, would be moved, not by principles, but by personal predilections. These, even with the best of their sex, do not always lean to the soundest and most stable wisdom, either for public or private life. We deprecate any interpretation of disrespect. We have known a gracious and noble example of cultured womanhood who could by no means be persuaded that one of the worst of our politicians, reputed also one of the most agreeable, was not all that he appeared; and who would infallibly have given him her vote, if she had had one to give. The female cohorts of crowded cities would espouse the cause of their favorites with a vehemence unknown to men; but it would be fatuity to believe that they would choose them in the interest of good government. We say nothing of the outcasts of society; though they, too, would have their watchword and their chief.

The evils of universal female, as of universal male suffrage, would be greatest in dense industrial populations. In the country, they would be less felt, and least of all in the rough and simple life of the thinly-settled borders, or the far West. Like other political evils, they would reach their climax in great cities. The government of these is difficult enough already. To make it impossible would be madness.

If it is urged that tax-paying women ought to vote in virtue of their tax-paying, it should be remembered that men have no such right. With us, the beggar and the millionaire vote alike. No political power is granted to the rich that is not granted to the poor; or, in other words, property is not acknowledged as a basis of representation. It is taxed, not because it confers a franchise, but because the Government protects or is presumed to protect it. The same measure of protection is given to the property of a woman as to that of a man. If female tax-payers were allowed to vote, one of two things would happen: a principle of government which was repudiated in the interest of democracy would be restored in the interest of wealth; or else all women, rich or poor, would receive the franchise together. The first alternative is hardly possible; under the second, the female property-holder would have her own vote to defend her property along with several needy female votes to imperil it; for the poor women outnumber the rich.

Those who wish the Roman Catholic Church to subvert our school system, control legislation, and become a mighty political force, can not do better than labor day and night for female suffrage. This, it is true, is opposed to every principle and tradition of that great Church, which, nevertheless, would reap from it immense benefits. The priests have little influence over a considerable part of their male flock; but their power is great over the women, who would repair to the polls at the word of command with edifying docility and zeal.

The right of voting and the duty of fighting should never be divorced. Women, though non-combatant, are abundantly combative when excited. It is conceivable that they might discover a *casus belli* when the men could not see it; and, with or without the help of sympathizing male zealots, might vote in majority that the men should fight. This they would probably refuse to do against their wishes and convictions, and the women, with law clearly on their side, could not help themselves. Law with no power to enforce it is futile and sometimes ridiculous. The above contingency is not likely to occur; but that it is simply possible shows the false position of a government subject to female suffrage.

Neither Congress, nor the States, nor the united voice of the whole people could permanently change the essential relations of the sexes. Universal female suffrage, even if decreed, would undo itself in time; but the attempt to establish it would work deplorable mischief. The question is, whether the persistency of a few agitators shall plunge us blindfold into the most reckless of all experiments; whether we shall adopt this supreme device for developing the defects of women, and demolish their real power to build an ugly mockery instead. For the sake of womanhood, let us hope not. In spite of the effect on the popular mind of the incessant repetition of a few trite fallacies, and in spite of the squeamishness that prevents the vast majority averse to the movement from uttering a word against it, let us trust that the good sense of the American people will vindicate itself against this most unnatural and pestilent revolution. In the full and normal development of womanhood lie the best interests of the world. Let us labor earnestly for it, and, that we may not labor in vain, let us save women from the barren perturbations of American politics. Let us respect them, and, that we may do so, let us pray for deliverance from female suffrage. □

"A French statesman once said that, against a mob of women, the Government is entirely helpless. There are no means of repression. Bullets, bayonets, sabers and grapeshot are out of the question. . . ."

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The Other Side of the Woman Question

Responses by Julia Ward Howe, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Lucy Stone, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton

1879

JULIA WARD HOWE.

The woman question, from the man's point of view, is very apt to be only the man question, after all. And the man, according to Mr. Parkman, questions thus: "Do we wish our women to vote? and, if we do not, what arguments can we find against their voting?" Starting from this point, with a zeal which can scarcely be mistaken for a candid spirit of inquiry, it is not surprising that very eloquent papers can be written, and a very plausible statement made, by individuals of one sex against the political enfranchisement of the other. Argument of this sort is no novelty nor rarity. The white man reasoned on this wise against the political enfranchisement of the black man. In fact, against every enlargement of representation many reasons have always been, and may always be, found.

"Those who vote already," it is said, "vote so badly. Why should we increase the number of fools who go to the polls?"

The danger of trusting mankind at large with the care of their own interests appears, and is, very great. The wise, among men as among women, are few. Culture, which quadruples the mental power of either sex, is not possessed by any majority in the known world. Ignorance may be deluded and misled, may even be bought and sold. Volumes of argument are written and spoken in this sense. And yet, representative government in time always makes good its position and right to exist. One reason of this is that it not only founds itself upon popular education, but is in itself an education. Under its dominion, men are educated to their duties by the exercise of their rights. The greatest truths, moreover, in politics as in religion, are often hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed to the simple multitude. It soon appears that the dangers foreseen in the enlargement of representation are dangers to the exceptional privileges of a class, not to the community.

Representation is what the friends of woman suffrage demand for one half of the community from which it has hitherto been withheld. The slaveholder was formerly supposed, by a legal fiction, to represent his slaves. By a similar fiction, men are held to represent women at the polls. The slaveholders represented their own interests, and men, in voting, do the same. It might be said in both instances that the true interest of the two parties is the same. This is true in a sense so enlarged that few male voters will be found to take it in. The good of each and the good of all are really one and the same. But men, even while professing this as their faith, rarely exemplify it in their voting. In much of their social and political action, they will pursue personal advantage as it presents itself to them, in the form of some immediate gain, and will only in rare instances consult that larger conception of the general good which holds that what is best for the community is also best for the individual. And, even if men in general were disposed to do this, are they so wise that women should be satisfied of their ability to do it? Even from this point of view, Mr. Parkman's statements are not encouraging. He tells us that the best men among us naturally shun politics. All of our women, then, the best included, are subject to the legislation of a set of men whom he characterizes as "practiced tricksters," or as "hungry and rapacious crowds." And their knowledge of this state of things will, he thinks, induce only "the coarse and contentious among women" to draw near to the political arena. It is, to say the least, a singular method of argument to adduce the imperfections of government as actually administered, as so many reasons why good women should be satisfied to keep aloof from participation in any attempt to make it better.

A very short space having been allotted to us for the consideration of a topic which Mr. Parkman has been allowed to treat *in extenso*, we must necessarily be content to pass his arguments in the briefest review, though not with cursory criticism. And we must say, in the first place, that these arguments are already very familiar to the advocates of woman suffrage. In every suffrage convention, and in legislation hearings on this subject, each of the points which he tries to make is taken up and carefully considered, full opportunity being granted to those who think otherwise to bring forward their view of the case. We can not remember any of those occasions in which the advantage has not remained with the friends of the measure. A person who wished to be rude to an eminent literary man told him that her own father had always advised her to avoid a schoolmaster. The gentleman replied, "It is evident that you have." The tenor of Mr. Parkman's remarks makes it very evident to us that, in his study of the woman-suffrage question, he has avoided the opportunities of enlightenment which its friends would gladly afford him. When he accuses them of occupying the platform with "frothy declamation" and the press with sensational stories; when he avers that,

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instead of claiming for women what is theirs, "a nature of their own, with laws of its own, and a high capacity of independent development, they propose, as the aim of their ambition, the imitation of men"—the friends of woman suffrage may be sure that Mr. Parkman has neither attended their meetings, nor read the journals and pamphlets in which their views are set forth. He can not have heard William Lloyd Garrison and Lucy Stone—he can not have read George William Curtis and Mary Eastman.

Why should one sex assume to legislate for both? Because it always has done so? That is no reason. All the innovations which have blest mankind might have been excluded from use on the same ground. Because the sex which claims the right to do this has the stronger muscles? It does not use these in the act of voting. Because the sexes differ from each other in certain moral and mental characteristics? This would seem to make it important that the necessities of each should have equal representation in a fair government. Because there is, on the whole, a substantial agreement between them in feeling and in interest? This fact, if granted, would merely make it very safe for women to represent their own side in their own way. Because the political enfranchisement of the hitherto non-voting sex would overthrow the family? In this view it is strange that the male advocates of woman suffrage are oftenest found among married men. Because one sex is military and militant, the other pacific and unmilitant? Do the fighting men of a community govern it? Woe to it if they do! Military rule is armed deposition. The solid sense of mankind to-day is against it. Because women have already possessed political power, and have abused it? This argument can be used with triple force against the other sex, whose abuse of political power is in large proportion to their use of it.

We have now breathlessly rehearsed the greater part of Mr. Parkman's objections to woman, or, as he calls it, female suffrage. Despite the narrow limits here assigned us, we will take time to reconsider one or two of them. The argument that women should not vote because they can not fight is a very threadbare one. It is an instance of that imaginary relation between two circumstances which leads the incautious thinker to link them together as cause and effect. What real connection is there between the act of fighting and the act of voting? A certain proportion only of the men of this or of any community are able to bear arms. Of these, a still smaller number will be called upon to do so, and that during a certain term of years only. Will those fighting men show any characteristics which shall make the ballot safer in their hands than in those of their non-fighting fellow citizens? The contrary impression seems generally to prevail among thoughtful people. The blind, unreasoning obedience of an army to its chiefs is felt to be at variance with the spirit of inquiry in which a voter should study the claims and merits of his candidate. Shall we say that the military are the guardians of the public peace? That office, in our day, seems to belong more clearly to the mother and the schoolteacher. Justice claims the right to govern. Education enforces the recognition of law, the respect of right, the claim of duty. The agencies which moralize society are its true defense, its real bulwark. The merciful and patient work of women can spare more bloodshed to any generation than can the whole military order.

What Mr. Parkman says about sex makes us feel that the masculine view of this attribute, too often reflected in the feminine mind, is liable to great exaggeration. Like every leading attribute of human nature, it is either a weakness or a power, according as it is intelligently trained or blindly followed. When men intentionally use it as a power, they naturally desire that it should become a weakness in those upon whom they wish to exert that power. Sex is certainly an important agent in human affairs, but not the most important. Its influence is easily exaggerated and lost. Men and women may have too much sexuality as well as too little. Society, if impoverished by the insufficiency of this quality, is also degraded by its excess. In men or in women sex is a power only when it is made subservient to reason, when thought and duty common to both sexes are brought forward and dwelt upon, uplifting both alike to self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice.

It is a great mistake to state the career of either sex as if its boundaries were necessarily definite and predetermined. Men are forced to undertake many things which are abhorrent to the ease which human nature covets. It is not their sex which leads them to do this, but some inner or outer necessity. Women are subject to these same necessities, and must again and again sacrifice personal convenience and inclination in view of offices whose performance becomes imperative. The farmer's wife digs potatoes in the field when he is too busy to do it. The farmer's daughter rides the mowing-machine when the men of the family are away with the army. The wife and mother, for whom domestic seclusion is made by theorists such a *sine qua non,* must feed helpless children by her labor, and support an invalid or profligate husband. Daughters keep aged fathers out of the almshouse. Sisters work at the loom to send a brother through his college course. In these cases the convenience of sex has to be set aside. The woman is obliged to ask, not "What is my sex?" but "What is my necessity, and how can I meet it?" The opponents of woman suffrage find nothing unfeminine in these acts, which tax the *physique* of the more tender sex far more severely than does the twofold effort of considering the merits of a candidate and recording one's conclusion by dropping a ballot in a box.

The liberties of women are necessarily abridged, in Mr. Parkman's view, by the dangers to which the unbridled passions of men give rise. He says, "A man in lonely places has nothing to lose but life and property, and he has nerve and muscle to defend them." In another place he speaks of the common theory that chastity is a virtue only in women, as one to which society holds to-day as firmly as it ever did. In both of these respects we think that a change may be not only looked for, but recognized, in the cruel manners of the world. Let us look at the first. The greatest danger of woman lies in the brutal sexuality of man. Her defense is supposed to lie in the chivalry of man. How shall she be assured, in trusting to the other sex the defense of her honor, that ferocious passion shall not get the better of chivalrous compassion?

Existing provisions fail to give to woman this promised protection. Violence may dog her harmless footsteps

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"Mr. Parkman shows an unusual power of conjuring up, from the abyss of the unknown, unlovely female phantoms with which to electrify the minds of his readers."

in her own garden, may cross the threshold of her home, and find her there, as elsewhere, defenseless. Restriction of the woman's movements does not, then, prove an availing defense. The restriction must be sought and enforced elsewhere. The man can be taught as effectually to subordinate this part of his nature to reason and conscience as any other. If, as is claimed, he is the stronger party, let him be trained to show his strength in self-restraint, since self-indulgence shows only his weakness.

But chivalry is not limited to the domain of men. Its heroic compassion is also at home in the hearts of women. The growing concern of the best women for the welfare of their sex has latterly led, in many countries, to studies and efforts which tend to its true protection. The labors of Mrs. Butler (of Liverpool) and her fellow workers, culminating in such events as the Congress of Public Morality, held in Geneva, in September, 1877, have associated many noble men and women in a crusade against the low standard of sexual morality, hitherto held to be binding upon the male sex. When such men as M. Pressensé, of the French Parliament, and Mr. Sternfeld, of the English House of Commons, take part in the proceedings of such a Congress, we may perceive that a new theory and influence are already making themselves felt in the administration of public morals.

Touching the justice of the claim of women to the elective franchise, Mr. Parkman says that "government by doctrines of abstract right, of which the French Revolution set the example, and bore the fruits, involves enormous danger and injustice."

We answer that government which opposes abstract right is fraught with far greater danger and injustice. Granted that while the recognition of a principle of right may be immediate, its embodiment in practice will remain a matter of slow and difficult endeavor. When, nevertheless, the principle has attained recognition, the policy which looks away from it, and excuses the neglect of a sacred duty by the inconvenience of its fulfillment, is short-sighted in its wisdom and short-lived in its success. But a sentence a little further on puzzles us extremely. Mr. Parkman says: "It is in the concrete, and not in the abstract, that rights prevail in every sound and wholesome society." Is right in the concrete, then, opposed to right in the abstract, and, where rights are enforced in the concrete, are they necessarily violated or neglected in the abstract? The woman-suffragists ask that an abstract right should be embodied in a concrete form, and Mr. Parkman replies to this by postulating a contradiction between abstract right and its concrete expression, which is valuable if viewed as a *reductio ad absurdum*.

To what authority can the concrete institutions of government appeal, if not to the principles of abstract right? The work which the French Revolution and our own essayed to do was to rectify concrete abuses by a return to the principles of ideal justice. While neither of these great efforts can be said to have been entirely successful, the measure of success which they did achieve is the most important attainment of the century which came to an end three years ago.

Mr. Parkman, like others of his creed, attempts to aid his reasoning by an analogy borrowed from the vegetable kingdom. "The palm," he says, "will not grow in the soil and climate of the pine." This metaphor seems to us peculiarly unfortunate, since man and woman, his pine and palm, necessarily grow in the same soil and climate. The question is, whether the pine shall make up his mind to allow the palm as much of the common soil and climate as he finds necessary for his own well-being. Or, rather, we should say that man and woman correspond to the male and female palms, for which every circumstance, except that of sex, is identical.

Mr. Parkman has no valid ground for assuring his readers that the granting of suffrage to women would bring into political efficiency women of the worst and most undesirable class, and leave "those of finer sensibilities and more delicate scruples" in what he would consider a masterly inactivity. In these remarks, and many others, Mr. Parkman shows a want of acquaintance with the character of the women engaged in the suffrage cause, which is singular, even in an antagonist. The question whether, in the case supposed, the vicious and ignorant would go to the polls, and the intelligent and virtuous stay away from them, is one often brought before a legislative hearing. At one of these, in which arguments on both sides had been heard, Mr. Garrison rose and said: "It seems to me that the present occasion is in itself an answer to this question. Here on the one side are character, intelligence, education petitioning for suffrage; and on the other are ignorance and vulgarity petitioning against it."

In his portrayal of the female politician of the future, Mr. Parkman shows an unusual power of conjuring up, from the abyss of the unknown, unlovely female phantoms with which to electrify the minds of his readers. Let them not mistake this, as he obviously does, for a true spirit of prophecy. Imagination can create such forms at will, and can easily set imaginary female voters to destroy an imaginary state. But this is not its noblest use. The future, like the past, can be read from an adequate or inadequate point of view. He who fails to seize the sense of the present can give no true account either of what has been or of what shall be. The true prophet discerns the signs of the times, the deep, normal tendencies of human nature, which are ever more and more toward amelioration, and the greater good of the greater number. That the future of human society is to be more and more dedicated to the peaceful development of human resources, that the reign of justice is gradually and permanently to supplant the reign of violence—these are prophecies far more ancient and weighty than are Mr. Parkman's predictions about "the bad time coming." This reign of peace and

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justice will be greatly promoted by the influence and action of women, who have everything to gain from it. While it can efface no substantial feature of either sex, it will secure fair play to both. To borrow one of Mr. Parkman's antitheses, it will bring us the concrete embodiment of the abstract truth uttered by St. Paul, that in the Christian harmony there is neither male nor female, but equal freedom for either sex to bear its burdens and perform its duties according to its own best wisdom and highest resolve.

THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON.

We read in Boswell's Johnson that when Boswell was drawing up, in 1776, a legal document which excluded all heirs female from the inheritance of a certain landed property, Dr. Johnson opposed the proceeding; and, when Boswell pleaded ancient Scottish traditions, Johnson said: "Women have natural and equitable claims, as well as men; and those claims are not to be lightly superseded or infringed. When fiefs implied military service, it is easily discerned why females could not inherit them, but that reason is at an end. As manners make laws, manners likewise repeal them."

It is the weakness of the stock arguments against woman suffrage that they are mainly based, like those of Boswell, on the survival of a tradition after social facts are changed. Reforms are not so often carried by pitched battles as by an unconscious change of habits, an insensible abandonment of prejudices, a new atmosphere of thought. You can no more replace the American woman in the position occupied by the Turkish or Hindoo woman than you can put the bird back into the egg: all that you can do is, to recognize the altered position and accept the consequences. From the Boswell point of view, each step is to be resisted, no matter how logically it follows. It was thought an innovation, in 1776, that a woman should be permitted to hold real estate in her own right. It may seem quite as great an innovation, in 1879, to let a married woman control her own earnings or to let any woman vote for anything. The same reply is always pertinent: in the words of Dr. Johnson, "As manners make laws, manners likewise repeal them."

It is not now the question whether woman suffrage would have been a project worth urging in the days of Charlemagne or Scott's Ivanhoe. Any form of popular government would in those days have seemed absurd enough; and woman suffrage simply incredible. But the novel measure wears quite a different light when proposed in a republic already a hundred years old, and avowedly deriving its just powers from the consent of the governed. It becomes quite transformed when we consider it as applied to a race of women who go unveiled and unguarded in the public streets; who study or teach in high-schools and colleges; who practice law and medicine; who serve on boards of education and charity; who publish books and deliver lectures; who hold real estate by a tenure as secure as that of men; who, even if married, control their own earnings and make their own wills. Grant that the woman of the feudal period would not have known what a ballot meant, if placed in her hands; that does not prevent the modern, civilized, Christianized woman from both knowing and using it.

The strength of the woman-suffrage movement in the United States of America lies in this, that every axiom, every position, claimed originally as applicable to American men, proves on reflection to be applicable to women also. Senator Hoar, of Massachusetts, once pointed out, in a speech, as a point which had greatly influenced his mind in behalf of this reform, that he had never heard a man argue against it for ten minutes without abandoning all the fundamental principles of republican government. These principles have never, perhaps, had a better statement than in Dr. Franklin's celebrated exposition: "That liberty or freedom consists in having an actual share in the appointment of those who frame the laws, and who are to be the guardians of every man's life, property, and peace; for the *all* of one man is as dear to him as the *all* of another; and the poor man has an equal right, but more need to have representatives in the Legislature than the rich one. That they who have no voice nor vote in the electing of representatives do not enjoy liberty, but are absolutely enslaved to those who have votes and to their representatives; for to be enslaved is to have governors whom other men have set over us, and be subject to laws made by the representatives of others, without having had representatives of our own to give consent in our behalf."

Had Franklin, with his usual astute wisdom, designedly drawn his charter of political rights so wide that it should inevitably, after another century, come to include women also, he could hardly have succeeded better. Those who deny these propositions for men, or believe their practical working to have been a failure, will of course deny them for women also. The appeal must be taken from this minority to the great body of the American people, who still believe in a republicanism such as Franklin described. If there is any principle on which all our institutions rest, in the popular mind, it is that of the right of every adult person, not laboring under special natural disqualification, to take part in the government of the country. How valuable or influential a part the individual will take may depend on a thousand things—education, wealth, energy, industry, worth; but no constitution can discriminate as to these things, and the effort to create inequality of rights on account of them has, when attempted on any considerable scale, always led to practical injustice. Nor has this injustice ever been more obvious than in the cruel laws in respect to women, now being gradually swept from the statute-books of our American States, but never seriously modified until, within less than fifty years, women themselves took up the discussion.

Either one must wholly take issue with Franklin's

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plain proposition, in which case one practically ceases to believe in republican government; or else one must maintain that the fact of sex is a special and hopeless natural disqualification for suffrage. If so, where does the disqualification lie? Not in character, because it is generally admitted that women are at least the equals of men in moral rectitude. Not in occupations, for those of women are not more absorbing, or more incompatible with the knowledge of public affairs, than those of men. Not in inability to urge their opinions or carry their points, for their critics usually concede to women an almost unreasonable tenacity of will. Not in inability to form opinions, wise or unwise; and be it observed that it is the habit of forming opinions, and not necessarily their wisdom when formed, on which enlightened conservatives have always based the arguments for extending the franchise. For instance, Dr. Arnold, in England, said admirably: "It is in vain to say that questions of religion and politics are above the understanding of the poorer classes; they are not above their misunderstanding, and they will think and talk about them." For "the poorer classes" read "women," and you have the exact statement of the present demand. As public questions—war, slavery, free trade, civil service reform, temperance, socialism—are all

"In the age that has produced Florence Nightingale and Mary Carpenter, it is quite needless to go for examples of feminine influence to the period of Montespan and Pompadour."

at least within the misunderstanding of women, it is of absolute importance to the community that women should understand them, and all experience shows that there is, on these questions, no educational discipline like the ballot.

When we seek the historic evidence for or against the capacity of women for public affairs, it is curious to see that those who doubt it are apt to look away from contemporary facts, and draw all their arguments from the nation where women have been most systematically excluded from direct power. The keen satirist Churchill has written the verdict on the French "Salique law," in words which are of unsurpassed keenness, and still full of instruction:

> "Women ruled all, and counselors of state
> Were at the doors of women forced to wait;
> Women, who've oft as sovereigns graced the land,
> But never governed well at second-hand."

Women can no more govern well at second-hand in Washington than in Paris; but, fortunately, the fitness of many a woman for the direct guidance of thought and action makes itself felt through the press and through benevolent organizations. Those of us who are in middle life received our first lessons in political economy from the tales of Harriet Martineau; and Mrs. Fawcett's little manual on the same subject is training the students of our high-schools and colleges. Garrison learned from Elizabeth Heyrick his motto "Immediate, unconditional emancipation," and Mrs. Stowe reënforced it with an influence such as no man brought to bear. In the age that has produced Florence Nightingale and Mary Carpenter, it is quite needless to go for examples of feminine influence to the period of Montespan and Pompadour.

There apparently remains no hopeless disqualification that can be urged against women, except the inability to bear arms. The fatal defect of this argument lies in the fact that it proves far too much. If women are to be disfranchised for want of military ability, it seems logically clear that all other classes should be enfranchised only in proportion as their military ability is shown. The records of our medical department during the civil war, as tabulated by Dr. J.H. Baxter, show where this standard of enfranchisement would lead us. It was found that of 1,000 clergymen, 954 were physically disqualified from military duty; of the same number of journalists, 740; of physicians, 670; of lawyers, 544. On the other hand, of 1,000 iron-workers, only 189 were disqualified; of tanners, 216; of farmers 350. Even of the despised tailors, long the by-word of effeminacy, the majority were fit for military duty; but of the lawyers only a minority, of "able editors" only a quarter, of "sound divines" next to none. It is fair to ask, of those who apply this standard to women, whether they are prepared to accept its consequences—the virtual disfranchisement of the more educated classes, and the distribution of suffrage according to physical ability alone? The nation, it would seem, never quite appreciated the value of John Morrissey's position in Congress: tried by this new standard, he was perhaps the only representative who had the logical right to be in his seat.

And surely it is not so long since our great civil war that we have forgotten its memories, and lost sight of the military service rendered by women—service which generals and statesmen once so gladly recognized. To begin with, as Lucy Stone once said, "The soldier risked his life for his country, but in every instance some woman risked her life that the soldier might be born." Then, in the early days of recruiting, who can forget the courage, the patience, the patriotism shown by women? And, as the war went on, the vast hospital service, the immense labors of the Sanitary Commission, gave at each step a fresh vindication of women's usefulness in war. Mary Livermore, organizing in the Western cities her magnificent series of fairs for the Sanitary Commission, and then visiting camp and gunboat to distribute aid; Clara Barton, driving her wagon of hospital supplies upon half the battle-fields of Virginia—were they not serving their country in war-time as effectually as the bounty-jumpers and the deserters? The truth is, that all this basis of disqualification is as obsolete, in these days, as was Boswell's theory that women could not hold real estate because they did not fight. As society grows more civi-

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lized, "that reason is at an end." Walter Bagehot has well said that, "in these days, mind without muscle has greater power than muscle without mind."

It was said of the American Federalists that they had too much of the wisdom of experience and too little of the wisdom of hope. It is too common, I think, for our educated men to share this distrustful solicitude; and we may well turn from it to the more manly hopefulness of Frederick Douglass, born and bred a slave. "I am willing," he said, "to trust all the virtue of the community to take care of all the vice of the community; all its knowledge to take care of all its ignorance. Therefore I am in favor of universal suffrage, and therefore I am in favor of extending that suffrage to women."

LUCY STONE

From the ripened harvests of the last half century there have been garnered many priceless sheaves for women—the right to be heard in their own defense; the right to higher education; the right to the medical profession; the right to the pulpit; the right to the bar; and the right to the wide fields of industrial activity. Odious and unjust discriminations against women have also been blotted from the statute-book, and wrested from the common law. In many States the old sin and shame which gave to any father, whether he was of age or not, the right to "will" or "deed" his unborn child, without the knowledge or consent of its mother and against her wish, has disappeared, and she may now be guardian of her own children. A wife is not now legally deprived of her personal property by marriage. She can own what she earns outside of her family. She can will a part of the property which she may have inherited or acquired. She can make valid contracts. She can carry on business and have the profit of it, if she make a legal record of the fact of her business—not else. In all these cases women have recognized legal rights which were unknown fifty years ago. These rights have all been won peacefully by argument and appeal to the conscience and good sense of the people.

Unjust and detestable legal inequalities remain, but their foundations are taken out and they must also vanish. Compared with the helplessness and humiliation of the former position, the gain of the present is immense.

The next point to win will be the right to the ballot. In any other country it would be necessary to show that political power naturally vests in the people. But here the whole ground is granted in advance. When our fathers came out of the war of the Revolution, made wiser by those seven years of suffering, they affirmed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident"; "Governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed"; "Taxation without representation is tyranny."

The Declaration of Independence was adopted unanimously by the representatives of the then United States, and the descendants of those representatives have held the same principles in theory ever since. It has been called the "Immortal Declaration." It has been read in every State on every Fourth of July since 1776. We have honored its authors, and the day that gave it utterance, as we honor no other day and no other men. Not only we, but in all the wide world round, men suffering under hoary despotisms, by a quick instinct turn their longing eyes to this country, and know that in the realization of our self-evident truths lies the charm by which their own bonds will be broken.

Article II. in the Declaration affirms: "All political power is inherent in the people. Government is instituted for the protection and benefit of the people, and they have a right at all times to alter or reform the same whenever the public good may require it."

The claim for the suffrage of women is, therefore, not "a new-fangled notion," but a demand for the practical application of admitted self-evident truths. Naturally, women ask, if "all political power is inherent in the people," why they, who are more than half the entire population, have no political existence? Is it because they are not people? Only a madman would say of a congregation of women, No people were there. They are counted as people in the census, and also in the ratio of representation of every State, to increase the political power of men. They are even held to be citizens, without the rights of citizenship, indeed, but to bear the burdens of "taxation without representation," which is "tyranny." They are only not people where political rights are involved.

"Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed"—not of the governed property-holders, nor of the governed fighting men, nor of the governed married men, but of the governed. Women are governed, and by the very theory of our government should give their consent: suffrage is the only form through which consent can be given.

What is suffrage? It is the prescribed method whereby, at a certain time and place, the will of the citizen is registered. It is the form in which the popular assent or dissent is indicated in reference to principles, measures, and men.

The essence of suffrage is rational choice. It follows, therefore, under our theory of government, that every individual capable of independent rational choice is rightfully entitled to vote.

The alien who is temporarily a resident is excepted. He is still a citizen of his native country, from which he may demand protection, and to which he owes allegiance. But, when he becomes a naturalized citizen, he is admitted to all the rights of citizenship, suffrage included.

The minor is excepted. The law holds him an infant. He is under guardianship as being incapable of rational choice until he arrives at years of discretion. Then he may vote. Idiots and lunatics are excepted because they are incapable of rational choice, and so can not vote. None of

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these cases conflict with the principle. But, when a woman is disfranchised because she is a woman, the principle is violated. She possesses every human faculty. No man would admit even to himself that his mother is not capable of rational choice. And, if the woman he has chosen for his wife is a fool, that fact lies at least as much against his ability to make a rational choice as against hers, and should put them both in the category of excepted persons.

But it is said the "consent of the governed" is only a theory, a "glittering generality"—that in fact the governed do not consent, and never have consented.

Yet this theory is the golden rule of political justice. The right of the citizen to participate in making the laws is the sole foundation of political morality. Deny this, and you justify despotism. On the principle of limited suffrage, aristocracy is blameless and republican institutions are impossible. Men who deny political rights to women can show no title to their own.

As there can be no argument against a self-evident truth, so none has ever been attempted. Instead of arguments, tradition, usage, habit, the dread of change, are all summoned to hold fast the old ways. The love of power, of leadership, and of domination urges men to resist any encroachment upon the field they have so long held, not to say usurped. A Massachusetts Senator said in his place in the Senate, opposing the petition of women for the ballot, "We men have the power, and we will not give it up until we are compelled to." With less offensiveness of statement and of manner, this sentiment underlies and overlies much masculine expression in regard to the political rights of women.

Fine feminine qualities are quoted with masterly skill. The benign influence of these qualities is set forth in glowing colors: "It can not be denied that the instincts of women are preëminently delicate and true; that in them the moral nature and the better emotions are more apt to rule than in the other sex; that their conscience is more sensitive, and their religious susceptibilities quicker and more controlling. . . . They can, if they will, create and maintain higher standards of thought and purpose, raise the whole tone of national life, and give our civilization the fullness that it lacks; for, if they raise themselves, they will infallibly raise the men with them." All this, and more, is accorded to women by men who affirm that women who are indispensable and beneficent in the home and in the family, beneficent and priceless as teachers in the schools, and invaluable in the Church, will, if they share political life, make its turbid pool still darker, and at the same time all their own fine qualities will become sources of crime and vice. "Many women will sell themselves; many more will sell their votes. Three fourths of them, when not urged by some pressing need or contagious passion, would be moved, not by principles, but by personal predilections." The reign of queens who have brought immeasurable good to their subjects is quoted, with their faults of temper or their positive vices, as proofs that women should not have political power. But the reigns of dissolute, cruel, tyrannical, and incompetent kings, who greatly outnumber any similar class of queens, are not admitted to subtract from or militate in the least against the masculine right and fitness to rule. So much do custom and prejudice blind the judgment of some of the best men.

Samson powerless before Delilah is quoted. Is it as an added proof of his special fitness to hold the reins of government, and another proof that women should continue to be governed without their consent? But the great mass of women are not Delilahs; and, if men go prone before those who are, it shows which is really the "weaker sex," and ought to abate somewhat from the arrogant claim that "man is governed by reason and not by emotion," and therefore better adapted to be the ruling power.

But all this may be left aside, and as much or as little weight added to it as one pleases. The facts to be considered are these: Women and men are in the world about an equal number—masculine qualities belonging to men and feminine qualities to women. These distinctive traits are a part of the eternal order and can not be manipulated by human hands. The interests of men and women are so involved that the good or evil of which either is the cause is inevitably shared by both. Government is indispensable to civilized society. Up to this time, the formation and administration of government have been mainly in the hands of men. What has been the result of this total separation of feminine qualities and power from the sphere of government? The nations of the earth have been engaged in almost ceaseless warfare. Bloodshed and murder, waste of life and treasure, have covered the whole field of masculine administration and sovereignty. National debts everywhere exist. Whole States are bankrupt and repudiate their debts. Men speak of the politics they have made as "a dirty pool"; an "ignoble scramble for place and power"; "a scene of bribery and corruption."

That this is so, lies patent to the most careless observer. But, when we look to see the effect of masculine legislation for women, we find that the common law, by a single sweep, blotted out the legal existence of every wife. It gave the "custody of her person" to her husband, and also the right to give her "moderate correction." It gave all that a wife could earn to her husband, whether it was the dollar the poor washer-woman received for her day's toil, or the price of the copyright of the books of Mrs. Sarah Norton. A wife could neither buy, nor sell, nor deed, nor will. The children she bore belonged absolutely to her husband. Every State in this Union has seen mothers fleeing with their children before infuriated and brutal husbands who were empowered by law to retake and dispose of both!

Most of these cruel laws have disappeared from the States where the demand and petition of woman suffragists have urged their removal; but they were made by men. Women have always been involved in all the consequences of wicked or foolish masculine legislation.

If men made war, the homes of women were pillaged and burned, their sons slaughtered, themselves and their daughters outraged and murdered, the natural toil of men imposed upon them in addition to their own. From the wreck of nations and the ruin of governments there has been no escape for women.

This subjugation of women, on the one hand, wrought endless mischief to women; first, by leading

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them to assume, from the unequal and inferior position given them by the law, where they rank with idiots and felons, that they were themselves inferior. As a result of this came the tendency to be satisfied with trifles, and all the more so because it was manifestly more pleasing to those on whom they were made dependent.

On the other hand, the very position of law-makers and rulers increased the self-conceit of men.

> "Woman is the lesser man, and all her passions,
> matched with mine,
> Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine."

This stanza expresses an idea still common among men. It has shaped itself in all our institutions—the college, the industries, the professions. Even in the home it created for woman humiliation and dependence.

The sense of superiority led men to establish a different standard of morality for themselves. They still hold that the same sin committed together by a man and a woman at the same time is less bad and less a sin on the part of the man, and that it "would be a far greater hardship to impose the same penalties on him that are now imposed on her for the same crime." This idea pervades society like an atmosphere.

A little boy, whose mother told him he should behave as well as girls do, said: "Are you quite sure you mean what you say? Don't you know boys can't be as good as girls, but they know the most?" So early had he learned the lesson set by the practice of daily life, by the idea which blunts and blinds the moral sense and scatters mildew and blight over all life's choicest things, and which furnishes one of the most cogent reasons for heeding the prayer of women for equal rights.

An undue sense of his own superiority, a contempt for the intellect of women, a lower moral standard for men, and a world devastated by wars, are among the results of masculine domination. They furnish abundant proof that something more and different is needed for the best good of individuals, of states, and of nations. But the only remaining things which have not been tried are feminine influence and character clothed with legal power, and the responsibility which attaches to such power.

The case may be stated thus: Shall the men and women who are to obey the laws have a right to make them, or shall only men have this right? Shall men and women who are to pay the taxes have a common right to decide the amount and the use of these taxes, or shall only men have this right? What can be more natural than the answer that parties alike involved should, when of mature age, sound mind, and not convicted of crime, have a common share in a common interest? What is more reasonable to suppose than that the great mass of women who now bless the home, who are the life of the Church, who are the main educators of the rising generation, would bring good to the state if they had the opportunity? What can be more just than that the consent of the governed men and women should be given to the laws that govern them?

When any causes make women less than their best, society feels it to its very core and is less than its best. The woman who sits by her baby's cradle, having learned no lessons of responsibility and self-reliance, whose mind is narrow, whose arm weak, and whose heart is timid, can impart to that child only what she herself possesses. What is so important to the public good as that women, who are the mothers, should have the benefit of that self-respect and self-reliance which come with and are inseparable from the possession of equal rights?

Say that women are different from men. It is for that very reason that suffragists have always urged this different being must be represented by herself. Her feminine qualities should have expression and binding influence in a government where she and her children are invested.

Say that women are excitable. Weight them with responsibility. Say that they are busy with the care of home and children. It is by that very fact they are safe as law-makers. Men scramble for place and power. The strife may involve bloodshed and war; may cause the wreck of nations, and the ruin of every home tie; father, mother, wife, child, all go down before this absorbing love of power. But with women is the permanent factor of motherhood. There is not one mother in millions who does not think ten times of what will be best for her child where she thinks once of what is best for herself. Her care is of the baby at her breast, of the child tugging at her finger, of her young sons and daughters. She longs to make smooth and safe ways for their feet. By a law which was not made by men, and can not be abrogated, the mother is bound to her child by ties which neither distance, nor absence, nor time can change. Every man knows that, however far or wide he wanders, or however he may cover himself with sin and shame, if his mother live her heart beats warm for him, and her arms will open wide with welcome. By so much the more as all others shut him out, by so much the more will she take him in.

This permanent relation must for ever, in the main, make the influence of women in the government a conservative one—conserving the interest of the family and the home, on the integrity of which depend both the safety and the permanence of society and of government.

The problem of American statesmanship to-day is how to embody in our institutions a guarantee of the rights of every citizen. There is only one way. Base government on the consent of the governed, and each class will protect itself.

Put this great principle of universal suffrage, irrespec-

". . .and if the woman he has chosen for his wife is a fool, that fact lies at least as much against [the man's] ability to make a rational choice as against hers, and should put them both in the category of excepted persons."

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tive of sex, race, or color, into the foundations of our temple of liberty, and it will rise in fair and beautiful proportions, "without the sound of a hammer, or the noise of any instrument," to stand at last perfect and entire, wanting nothing. Omit it, and only "He who sees the end from the beginning" knows by what lessons of losses the nation must learn that the path of justice is the only path of peace and safety.

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON.

The first half of Mr. Francis Parkman's essay is devoted to a consideration of the difference of sex, in which he asserts—1. That the advocates of woman's rights deny that sex is based on differences rather than resemblances; 2. That these differences set well-defined limitations to woman's activities, and make her inferior to man.

1. The advocates of woman's rights do not deny a difference in sex, but, on the contrary, base their strongest arguments for equal rights on this very principle, because of its mutually protecting, elevating, invigorating power over the sexes. But sex does not necessarily compel so broad a difference in the capacities and employments of men and women as some of Mr. Parkman's positions would indicate, for the resemblances of sex are as great as their differences.

Darwin says that, in every female, all the secondary male characteristics, and, in every male, all the secondary female characteristics, exist in a latent form, ready to be evolved under certain conditions. Galton and Ribot, in their works on heredity, show that daughters more frequently inherit the characteristics of the father, and sons the characteristics of the mother. Since, then, physiological and psychological forces move in continuous circles, men and women can not be so absolutely different in their feelings and capacities as to require entirely separate spheres of action.

On this point Mr. Parkman himself says: "Whatever qualities of a woman are transmissible by inheritance, may descend to all her offspring alike. The male infant would be as apt to receive them as the female." The reciprocity between the two separate halves of human nature extends over a wide field, not only in passions and emotions, but in the regions of moral and intellectual life. Most intelligent men have felt the stimulus and refreshment of the faculties that spring from the companionship of an intelligent and congenial woman, and which is unlike anything resulting from the contact of a male mind. It is a fructifying power, with which neither the world of thought nor the world of action could well dispense. Many men of the higher sort recall as an epoch in their lives that wonderful awakening of energies, ambitions, and aspirations which comes with the first consciousness of the influence of the other sex.

And woman feels the same inspiring, invigorating power in the society of superior men: under such influence she is conscious of a clearer vision of great truths, before but dimly seen; for, as there is just that physical difference in man and woman necessary for the preservation of the race, so there is just that psychical difference necessary to the vitalization of thought.

Why not, then, avail ourselves of these natural forces for the best development of men and women by closer association in the higher departments of thought and action? The old idea of different spheres should now give place to the higher idea of different responsibilities in the same sphere. Wherever duty summons man, woman has a corresponding duty in the same place. If to war, man fights the battles, woman does good service in the hospitals. If to the home, the mother guides the household, the father supplements his home duties with some profitable occupation outside. When he is inefficient, disabled, or dead, the mother fills both offices, as housekeeper and provider, and the facts of life show that this is no uncommon experience. And Mr. Parkman himself admits that, "between the life for which women alone are fit and that for which men alone are fit, there lies a region where both may prosper." As physicians, lawyers, pastors, teachers, laborers in many forms of industry, they now occupy the same positions as men, and as legislators there is no reason why they might not do equally good work for the state.

As women have ably filled all offices in life, "Nature's limitations" are yet to be discovered, unless we accept Mr. Parkman's physical encounters in "lonely places" with the lowest orders of manhood. And even here a right public sentiment would do much to insure woman's safety everywhere. You can not go so low down in the scale of being as to find a class of men who would desecrate our churches, profane the altars, and toss about the symbols of the sacrament, because they have been taught from their earliest infancy a holy reverence for the priesthood and their temples. But where are taught lessons of respect for woman? And yet, as mother of the race, she is more than churches, altars, symbols, priests, and, in her highest development, will do more to draw man from the hells to heaven than all other powers combined. I hold men in high places responsible for the outrages of the lower orders. The contemptuous phrases and unjust statutes for women learned in our law schools; the allegory of the creation of woman, the curse, the injunctions for her subjection studied in our theological schools; and the general tone of literature and the daily press, all tend to degrade woman in the mind of the masses. If all these influences were turned in the direction of justice, equality, and honor for woman, the moral atmosphere would soon be purified. The compass is not a surer guide for the mariner amid darkness and danger than the opinions of leading minds for the multitude. If our best men with pen and word would do for woman now what with their swords brave knights did in the age of chivalry, our daughters would soon be safe everywhere, alike in "lonely places" and the crowded marts of trade.

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Mrs. Chisholm's narrative shows too well that in the trying emergencies of life, prepared or unprepared, woman must learn to stand alone, and bravely meet danger and death. Chance insults from the lower orders are light indeed compared with those that are coined into laws and constitutions by our husbands, fathers, brothers, sons. No rude jest from an ignorant ruffian could so stir a proud woman's blood as a well-written travesty on her sex from the pen of a man of learning and position.

2. Mr. Parkman clearly makes a difference of sex involve a general inferiority for woman. In the whole range of government, the most exalted of all sciences, he considers her incapable. When we contemplate the wide field thus covered—all our political, religious, educational, commercial, and social interests; the sanitary condition and the discipline of our cities, schools, asylums, jails, prisons, and homes—the question arises, Where is woman capable and where is her sphere of action, if she is to have no voice in the legislation on all these vital subjects? By quoting the opinions of two cultivated women on a given point where right is as clear as the sunlight, from their obtuseness Mr. Parkman argues a general deficiency in woman's moral perceptive faculties.

Again, though Mr. Parkman asserts that "women and not men are of necessity the guardians of the integrity of the family and the truth of succession," yet, even here, he makes "the family unit" man, who is to vote on all questions concerning the home. True, in his analysis of woman, Mr. Parkman refers to some "high and priceless qualities," but seems to take more delight in casting slurs at the ideal enfranchised woman. She is governed by "emotion" rather than by "reason," he informs us; that she is "impetuous," her will is "intractable," she is "impulsive," "excitable," full of "artfulness, effrontery, insensibility"; endowed with "a pushing self-assertion, and a glib tongue"; moved by "motives of love, predilection, jealousy, or schemes of alliance"; she would possess "the cowardly courage of the virago," a "tongue more terrible than the sword," and would give vent to "shrill-tongued discussions," etc.

If this is the idea that the sons of the Pilgrims have of us, no wonder they are afraid to take the word "male" out of the Constitution and admit us to the political arena. But Mr. Parkman tells us that "a man's tongue is strong only as the organ of reason and eloquence." I would his pen were always strong in the same direction! But, had man's tongue through the ages been his only weapon of defense, it might also have come to be "more terrible than the sword." The honest testimony from one hundred families as to the self-control, sound reason, and lofty eloquence with which men use their tongues in domestic life—especially when asked for money—would afford some interesting statistics by which to estimate the comparative merits of the sexes in their general tone of conversation.

It may be confidently asserted, however, that woman has proved herself man's equal in all the great struggles of humanity. Always at a disadvantage on account of artificial burdens and restraints, she has, nevertheless, shown herself possessed of the same courage, intelligence, and moral elevation in all the varied trials she has been called upon to suffer. Brute force should be thrown out of this question, especially as among men our scholars, heroes, statesmen, and orators are so frequently small, delicately organized, and of the same sensitive, nervous temperament as the majority of women. The organism of woman is as complete as that of man. Because a man-of-war could sink one of our magnificent ocean-steamers, does not prove the former superior except for the one purpose of destruction. In the every-day uses of life the steamer has the advantage. The experiment of co-education has proved girls equal to boys in every department of learning.

"This nineteenth century," says Victor Hugo, "belongs to woman." She is stretching forth her hand, as never before, to grasp new power in all directions, and is close in the wake of man in the whole realm of thought and action. With telescopic vision she explores the starry firmament and brings back the history of the planetary world; with chart and compass she pilots ships across the sea; and with skillful fingers sends electric messages around the world. By her the virtues of humanity are immortalized on canvas, and dull blocks of marble are transformed into angels of light. In music she speaks again the language of Mendelssohn and Beethoven, and

"No rude jest from an ignorant ruffian could so stir a proud woman's blood as a well-written travesty on her sex from the pen of a man of learning and position."

is a worthy interpreter of their great thoughts; in poetry and romance she holds an equal place; and has touched the key-note of reform in politics, religion, and social life. She fills the editor's and professor's chair, pleads at the bar of justice, and speaks from the pulpit and platform. Such is the type of womanhood the world welcomes today.

But a difference in sex has no more to do with the civil and political rights of a citizen than a difference in race; and this brings us to the second part of Mr. Parkman's essay, in which he discusses woman suffrage *per se*. His objections may be summed up as follows: 1. Women do not want to vote; the best would not, the worst would. 2. Women would debase politics rather than elevate it. 3. Woman suffrage would destroy the unity of the family. 4. If women vote, they must do military duty. 5. Woman suffrage would strengthen the Roman Catholic Church. 6. Woman suffrage based on taxation is opposed to the genius of our Government. 7. Suffrage is not a natural right.

The first three points are answered by the fact, that though women are voting in England and Canada on municipal questions, in Wyoming Territory on the same conditions as men, in some of our States on school affairs, and are filling many offices under Government, the testi-

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mony of able and distinguished gentlemen as to the real results are, in all cases, favorable. These facts should outweigh Mr. Parkman's speculations. In Wyoming, where women have voted for nine years, the evidence shows that the best women do go to the polls, the worst do not; that the women are governed by the highest moral considerations in discharging the great responsibilities of citizenship; that family life has not been disturbed; that the women have not become "nervous," "excitable," or "impulsive," but more calm, dignified, and sedate in assuming their new duties. On all these points the printed opinions of three successive Governors of the Territory, a Judge who sat on the Wyoming bench four years, the leading editors of the Territory, and prominent citizens of both sexes and of both parties, agree. The Hon. John W. Kingman, late Judge of the Wyoming Supreme Court, testified as follows before the Joint Special Committee of the Massachusetts Legislature on woman suffrage in 1876: "At our last election a larger proportion of women voted than of men. We have had no trouble from the presence of bad women at the polls. It has been said that the delicate and cultured women would shrink away, and the bold and indelicate come to the front in public affairs. This we feared; but certainly nothing of the kind has happened. The women manifest a great deal of independence in their preference of candidates, and have frequently defeated bad nominations. They are becoming every year more and more interested in public affairs; they are less under the influence of private interest, friendship, and party feeling, and are less subject to the temptations which bias the political action of men. As jurors women have done excellent service. They are less subject to the distracting influences which sometimes sway the action of men in the jury-box. With a stronger tension on the conscience, they seem more anxious to do right. On petit juries the women held the men up to a higher tone of morality and stricter sense of honesty than they would have exercised if left to themselves."

As regards the number of women who vote in England, the London "Examiner" says: "In sixty-six municipal elections, out of every 1,000 women who enjoy equal rights with men on the register, 516 went to the poll, which is but forty-eight less than the proportionate number of men. And out of 27,949 women registered, where a contest occurred, 14,416 voted. Of men there were 166,781 on the register, and 90,080 at the poll."

3. To say that it would destroy the unity of the family to educate our daughters like our sons with a knowledge of the principles of political economy and constitutional law, and give them an equal right to express their opinions at the ballot-box, is a very serious reflection on the men of our households, and justifies John Stuart Mill's remark that "the generality of the male sex can not yet tolerate the idea of living with an equal." "The family unit" assumption is opposed to our republican idea of individual rights, to our Protestant tenet of private judgment and conscience. We might as well say that the family is a religious unit, as to assert that it is a political unit, and claim that the head must do the family repenting, praying, and confessing, and represent the family in the courts of heaven as well as at the polling-booth. The doctrine that the head of the family is alone destined for the joys of heaven and the woes of hell would relieve the minds of women and children from many gloomy forebodings. Fortunately for the honor of manhood, the experiment in Wyoming proves that woman suffrage does not destroy the peace of home. The editor of the Laramie (Wyoming) "Sentinel," in the number for December 16, 1878, says: "While women in this Territory frequently vote contrary to their husbands, we have never heard of a case where the family ties or domestic relations were disturbed by it; and we believe that among the pioneers of the West there is more honor and manhood than to abuse a wife because she does not think as we do about politics or religion."

4. As none of our constitutions make military capacity a qualification for suffrage, this point has no significance. The weakness of this trite objection can be easily shown by a glance at the large class of men who vote but never fight. All the office-holders under Government—and their name is legion—are exempt from military duty. So are the clergy, paupers, the Quakers, the lame, the halt and the blind; but each and all have the right to vote.

5. We are warned against the women of the Romish Church, so absolutely under the power of the priests, as a dangerous element in our free institutions if permitted to vote. The same fear is sometimes expressed in regard to Protestant women: they would destroy the secular nature of our Government if given the ballot. If women were enfranchised, they would not be priest-ridden. Too much of their activity is now confined to the churches. Throw politics open to woman, and you weaken the hold of the Church upon her.

6. If suffrage based on taxation is opposed to the genius of our Government, is not taxation without representation equally opposed to it?

7. Suffrage *is* a natural right. The right of self-government, of self-protection, the right to defend one's person and property, to secure life, liberty, and happiness, not a natural right? It is the key-stone of the arch on which rests our temple of liberty. In a warm debate on the Fourteenth Amendment in the Senate a member said, "Suffrage is a political right, that the few may give or withhold at their pleasure." "Let that idea," replied Sumner, "crystallize in the minds of our people and we have rung the death-knell of American liberties." To deny this principle takes all significance from the grand debates of the century on human rights that culminated in our civil war! In the most celebrated document which has been put forth on this side of the Atlantic, our ancestors declare that "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed." This principle, ofttimes repeated by distinguished statesmen and eminent jurists, in varied forms and language, as far back as Blackstone, should find a ready response in the mind of every American citizen. □

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Woman Suffrage in Practice

1894

Davis H. Waite
Governor of Colorado

"To my knowledge, there are no just objections to equal suffrage."

GOVERNOR WAITE:

As the result of last Fall's election, the women of Colorado were enfranchised and became possessed of all the rights of citizenship. In republics there are, in favor of equal suffrage, two principles, against which no just objection can be made—

1. There should be no taxation without representation.

There is, without doubt, plenty of taxation without representation, aside from the taxation of women, but this does not affect or in any manner excuse the fact that the women, a large class of people, amounting to nearly or quite one-half, are taxed without representation. The idea that women are represented by their husbands or sons is often incorrect where these relations exist, and totally fails in cases where the women are unmarried.

2. Suffrage should be based on intelligence.

Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. If a woman has the mental ability to protest against unjust laws, and to demand enactments calculated to promote the general welfare, why should not her wishes, and most especially when taxed as a citizen, be consulted in the exercise of the powers of the government?

The tendency of the age has been to the extension of suffrage, but regardless of the rights of women. The

Lorenzo Crounse
Governor of Nebraska

". . .The amendment was. . .inspired by advocates and agitators from without who supposed Nebraska to be a new and promising field for experiment."

GOVERNOR CROUNSE:

At its session held in 1881 the Legislature of Nebraska was induced to pass an Act providing for the submission to the people of a proposed amendment to the State constitution extending the elective franchise to women. This action on the part of the Legislature proceeded not so much from a conviction that the amendment was necessary as it did from a desire to test the sense of our people on the subject. Neither did the amendment grow out of any urgent demand on the part of the women of the State, but it was rather inspired by advocates and agitators from without who supposed Nebraska to be a new and promising field for experiment.

The vote on the proposed amendment, which was taken in November, 1882, was preceded by a campaign of marked activity and earnestness, and if the minds of the women of the State were not awakened to a sense of wrongs endured and rights denied, it was from no lack of teaching and exhortation. The canvass received the benefit and impetus of the National Woman Suffrage Convention which was held at Omaha, the metropolis of the State, in September of that year, and which was largely attended by ladies from all parts of the United States, some of whom had earned a national reputation as advo-

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Waite:

elective franchise was given to the negro in the South, with all his unfitness. From a very early period the bars of suffrage in the great Northwest have been let down, and the most ignorant male foreigners unable to speak our language, or realize the meaning of the "declaration of intentions," or even the act of voting, have been endowed with suffrage in advance of citizenship, and many of them have shamelessly sold their votes to yet more shameless buyers. Undoubtedly such extension of suffrage was an error. The remedy, to some extent at least, has been by education, to assimilate this unfit mass of voters, and transform them into good citizens. Up to twenty years ago the common schools of the land did educate the youth of the country, so as to preserve the nation from decay. But since that time the irruption of pauper and contract labor has been so immense, has so concentrated in labor centres, and so isolated in customs, language, and residence, that the standard of national intelligence has been lowered, and the ratio of ignorance increased.

The political rights of woman in the past have been practically ignored in the United States, though recognized in Utah, Wyoming, Washington, and now in Colorado. Man, with his physical and mental superiority, has had unlimited control both in this and all other nations, and none can deny that liberty is endangered, and human rights are stricken down all over the world. Let me quote from two of the greatest clergymen of the age.

Cardinal Gibbons says:

> The economic conditions of the United States are fast approaching those of England. The homes of the poor are marked by destitution and squalor. The light of Heaven is being closed from miserable tenement room and attic. Flesh and blood are becoming more cheap and bread more dear. The well-being of the car horse is more solicitously watched than that of the driver. Small wonder that strong men, maddened by the tears of a wife and cries of starving children, sometimes band themselves together and resort to deeds of violence.

Said Bishop Potter, of New York, in a recent sermon:

> When I speak of this as an era of plutocrats, nobody can misunderstand me. All recognize the rise of the money power. Its growth not merely destroys the independence of the people, but the blind believers in the omnipotent power of money assert that its liberal use condones every offence. The pulpit does not speak out as it should. These plutocrats are the enemies of religion as they are of the state. I have heard the corrupt use of money in elections, and the sale of the sacred right of the ballot, openly defended by ministers of the Gospel.

Bishop Simpson, a distinguished Methodist divine, said in 1864 that "no great moral reform would ever be enforced by law until the right of suffrage was given to women."

The necessity of some remedy for such conditions cannot be denied. To my knowledge, there are no just objections to equal suffrage. It is claimed that to admit women to full citizenship includes the right to be elected

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cates of the cause. Many of these ladies under the leadership of the veteran, Susan B. Anthony, distributed themselves throughout the State and labored unceasingly until the close of the polls. Nevertheless, the result showed a vote of but 25,756 for, and 50,693 against, the proposed amendment, while 12,619 voted neither way—or out of a total vote of nearly 90,000, but 25,756 declared themselves in favor of it. It is fair to assume that the 25,756 males who voted for the proposed amendment were actuated by the same gallantry and spirit of fairness which moved the Legislature to submit it, and voiced the sentiment of all the women who demanded it.

It is also but fair to assume that while some 13,000 were indifferent to the question, the other 50,000 represented the women who were willing to leave the ballot with their husbands, fathers, and brothers, whose good judgment they respected, and whose wisdom and care stood attested by many laws on our statute-books enacted for the protection of their person and property. This adverse vote also included that other numerous class who not only believe there is no necessity for woman's participation in active politics, but who claim as against "woman's rights" the right to be let alone and not to be forced by their bolder and more ambitious sisters into fields which they feel that nature and a sense of delicacy disqualify them from entering. For, argue as we may, the franchise once bestowed, the obligation falls on all women alike to exercise it. When granted, it comes not simply as a privilege or right, but it falls as a duty—a duty which rests especially on the intelligent and virtuous. When the bold, the bad, and the ambitious among the women, like their kind among the males, are moving in the direction of bad legislation and loose government, the educated and refined will be compelled to lay aside their modesty and, willingly or unwillingly, will be forced to oppose them.

Nebraska is an agricultural rather than a manufacturing State and there are no laws of a special character required for the benefit of women. But every reasonable demand short of a grant of the elective franchise seems to have been anticipated by our statutes. The laws have even gone further and given women rights and privileges not bestowed upon males. In common with the statutes of most States, those of Nebraska declare that all property, real and personal, which a woman possesses at the time of her marriage, and any which may come to her by descent, gift, or purchase, becomes and remains her separate property and is not subject to disposal by her husband or liable for his debts. She may also, as a married woman, carry on trade or business on her own account, and the earnings shall be her own, while the husband is liable at the same time for the support of herself and of their family. Should she make the mistake of marrying a husband cruel enough to maltreat her, or one so shiftless as to fail to support her, she can rid herself of him by divorce.

In the election of school officers mothers and taxpay-

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to office, and this, carried out, say certain scientists, "would defy nature; it would pull the woman out of her element, willing or unwilling, with the fact under their noses that the mass of women, out of their sphere, through ignorance or hard facts, are, by their weakness, in an unnatural position, forced to inferiority. They are women, and not men. When they fight man, there may be one here and there found to hold her own, but the mass are driven to the ragged edge or into the gutter."

But why need war, pestilence, and famine be the normal conditon of mankind? Mr. Kinney forgets that in the so-called "battle of life" women have never had a fair chance. They are weaker physically and perhaps, as a mass, mentally than men, but until within a few years the higher walks of education have been closed to them. A proper sphere of women, without doubt, is to bear children, and this fact will prevent women from engaging so extensively as men in legislative and official duties, but it deserves little consideration as against the right of women to suffrage, or to hold office, if, all things considered, she is the choice of the people. It is objected that in time of war, women cannot fight in the ranks. That is true, but battles are not won wholly in the field. The patriotic women North and South, in the late unpleasantness, in their own legitimate way, accomplished as much and perhaps more than the warriors on the battlefield.

It must be admitted that the effect which equal suffrage will produce upon the State and nation is a matter of conjecture. In Utah, the right of women to vote under the Territorial laws did not injuriously affect polygamy, but polygamy there was a tenet of the Mormon religion, and a large proportion of the female voters were polygamists by faith or practice. In Wyoming and Washington, to my knowledge, no extraordinary progress has been made in the line of political reform that can be traced to female suffrage, and in Colorado sufficient time has not elapsed to speak understandingly of the result. Certainly there is little hope of the future, unless women, admitted to suffrage, acquaint themselves more thoroughly than men with political affairs, and "come up with greater zeal to the help of the Lord against the mighty," in providing a remedy for the fearful condition of this nation, the result of the positive acts of conspiring monopolists, and the hitherto criminal negligence of the mass of the voters.

Of course there is nothing in equal suffrage that of itself is partisan. In every State, men of all parties either support or oppose female suffrage, but there is no doubt that in Colorado the women owe suffrage to the Populists. The Populists in the General Assembly nearly all supported the bill, but a majority of the members of both the old parties voted in opposition. The law was recommended by a Populist governor, the bill was introduced by a Populist Representative, at the general election the Populist part in the State supported the measure; but nearly all the Republican counties and all the Democratic counties voted largely against it. □

Crounse:

ing women are allowed to vote. This right, however, is rarely exercised.

The laws relating to the sale of intoxicating liquors and in which the women of the State are so vitally concerned, have been carefully and wisely considered. Liquors can be lawfully sold only under a license for which the vendor must pay for the benefit of the school fund the sum of $500 at least, or such greater sum as the local authorities may demand, thus enabling localities where the sentiment will sustain the action to fix the price so high as to amount to prohibition. Applicants for licenses must have the indorsement of thirty freeholders certifying to their respectability and standing, and before entering upon their business they must give a bond in the sum of $5,000 that they will not violate any of the provisions of the law regulating the sale of intoxicating drinks. Among these restrictions are those forbidding sale to minors and habitual drunkards, and coupled with these is a special provision for the benefit of married women, enabling them to maintain in their own right a suit on the bond for all damages sustained by themselves or their children on account of liquors sold to their husbands.

By way of comparison it may be remarked that the Nebraska laws relating to the sale of intoxicating liquors are far more thorough and far reaching, and are better observed, than they are in the sister and adjoining State, Wyoming, where woman suffrage has obtained for quarter of a century. In an article on "Woman Suffrage in Wyoming," which recently appeared in the Chicago *Record*, the writer, commenting on reports from correspondents who have been on the ground, says, among other things:

> At the capital city of the State gambling houses are abundant and open saloons are as frequent as any other kind of stores, and the charge is made that 'not a single act of legislation aimed at the betterment of the human race has been passed through woman's influence.'

How true this may be I cannot say, but it is true that in Lincoln, the capital city of Nebraska, a city of more than 65,000 inhabitants, there are no gambling-houses, no houses of prostitution, and the few saloons which exist are held under the most rigid restriction.

The verdict of 1882 stands, in my opinion, as the verdict of to-day. If, however, at any time the general wish of the women of the State shall be for the elective franchise, I have no doubt that it will be accorded to them. Nevertheless, without it Nebraska's advance in wealth, population, and in the scale of intelligence stands with scarcely a parallel; but what she is stands to the credit of woman as much as to that of man. Nebraska's sons are largely what their mothers have made them, and what the husbands have achieved has been with the advice and support of the wives, whose influence is felt in a thousand ways other than in the caucus, the convention, or at the polls. □

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THE RIGHT REV. WILLIAM CROSWELL DOANE, BISHOP OF ALBANY

Why Women Do Not Want the Ballot

1895

Whether we like it or not, the question of giving the ballot to women is a question to be faced. From the last Legislature of the State of New York favorable action was secured on the proposal to submit to popular vote the omission of the word "male" from the qualification of voters in the Constitution. This is of course only tentative and preliminary. Another Legislature must pass the law before it can be submitted to the people. But it behooves men and women who are opposed to it to be awake to the duty of hindering its further progress. . . .

It seems important, in view of the renewed effort in Albany this coming winter, to appeal to the sober-minded thought of men and women; to omit rhetoric, oratory, abuse, misrepresentation, and ask for a serious consideration of a subject, certainly fraught with grave and serious consequences; for anything that touches the ballot touches the foundations of government. Among the difficulties which beset the whole question now are the indifference and listlessness, or the frivolity and trifling with which in too many instances it is regarded. Many a man says: "Oh! let the experiment be tried; it cannot succeed; it will do no harm to pay women the courtesy of this complimentary vote, and then defeat it at the polls." But this is an experiment too much like playing with fire to be safe. Once granted, it can never be recalled. And the risk of random voting on matters of such importance is too great to be run. Many a woman opposed to the measure feels that the whole thought of signing petitions, and having her name printed, and appealing to the Legislature, is so distasteful to her, that she would prefer to take the chance of probable failure. Meanwhile, the advocates pile up petitions, and multiply unmeaning names. Many a man trifles with his responsibility, under the silly idea that it is ungallant to say "*No*" to a woman. And many a woman laughs at the whole matter as a joke, mixed up with bicycles and bloomers, and a number of other trivial questions which have no remotest relation to the principle involved.

Let us look fairly and squarely at the facts. There is one class of women to be eliminated from the discussion, because they fly into a "frenzy" which is not "fine," mistake abuse for argument, and are only vulgarly violent, with sharp tongues or sharper pens saturated with bitterness and venom. They are, if there were *only* such as these, their own best answerers, furnishing sufficient reason against the movement. There is another class which includes members of both sexes, with whom one cannot deal without sacrificing self-respect or reverence, who revile all that one holds in holiest veneration, Holy Scripture, holy Matrimony, St. Paul, even our dear Lord Himself. How reverent and religious women can cast their lot in with a cause which has this drift in it is inconceivable; and yet some of them do so. One has neither need nor desire to make reply to such as these. They may be safely left, when the sediment has gathered at the bottom, and shows through the quietness of the settled surface, to their own condemnation.

But the cause has among its adherents and advocates a very different class of women and men, to whose sober second thought it is worth while to appeal, and against whose specious but sincere reasonings others need to be warned and guarded. It is because of these, and of their reasonings, that this paper is written. It is not intended to argue the underlying principles of the case, which have been argued abundantly already, but only to assert them.

1. Suffrage is not a right of anybody. It is a priv-

"With women mingling in the rough strifes and contests of political life. . ., there will inevitably come the quenching of that chivalrous feeling of men towards women, born of the protection hitherto expected by women and afforded by men. . ."

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ilege granted by the constitution to such persons as the framers of the constitution and the founders of the government deem best.

2. The old political proverb, "No taxation without representation," is utterly inapplicable to this question. It grew out of the tyrannical action of a government "across the sea," in which no one of all the people on whom the tax was levied had the faintest voice in the framing of the laws or in the choice of the government. We may be said to have in this country a great deal of representation without taxation, because, in thousands of instances, voters, and indeed the very men who impose the tax, own no property at all. But women who are taxed *are* represented by their relatives, by their potent influence, and by men's sense of justice, amounting even to chivalry, which the woman suffragists are doing all they can to destroy, but which has secured to them far more protection, far more independent control of their property, than men have reserved to themselves. The complement and object of taxation is not the right to vote, but the protection of property. And women's property is better protected than men's.

3. Equality does not mean identity of duties, rights, privileges, occupations. The sex differences are proof enough of this. The paths in which men and women are set to walk are parallel, but not the same. And the equilibrium of society cannot be maintained, nor the equipoise of the body, unless this is recognized. As St. Paul put it forcibly long ago: "If the whole body were hearing, where were the smelling?" Over-stocked professions, men and women crowding each other in and out of occupation, neglected duties, responsibilities divided until they are destroyed, must be the result if this unnatural idea be enforced.

4. The theory of increased wages for women, to be secured by giving votes to women-workers, is equally preposterous. Wages, like work, are regulated by the unfailing law of supply and demand. Work cannot be created, and wages cannot be forced up. If there are too many workers there will be less employment and lower pay.

These are some of the fundamental and axiomatic truths of the argument.

It is important, too, to guard against the specious method of mixing up things that have no relation to each other. A man or a woman who opposes the forcing of the ballot upon women is classed with the people who dislike female bicyclists and the bloomer costume—questions of taste about which we may differ, but which lie upon the lower plane of aesthetics. The unattractiveness of an ugly dress or an ungraceful movement may repel a man's feelings and lessen the charm of a woman, but there it ends. Women may ride bicycles and wear bloomers without violating any political principle, provided they neither ride *on* the one, nor walk *in* the other, to the polls.

It is still more important to draw another distinction. The slavery of American women exists only in the warped imaginations and heated rhetoric of a few people, who have screamed themselves hoarse upon platforms or written themselves into a rage in newspapers. There is no freer human being on earth to-day, thank God, than the American woman. She has freedom of person, of property, and of profession, absolute and entire. She has all liberty that is not license.

Let a woman tell the facts. I quote from one of Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer's admirable papers in the New York *World*:

> For more than thirty years all the women of New York have been able to enjoy their own property, whether inherited or acquired, without control or interference from any man. A married woman may carry on a trade, business, or profession and keep her earnings for herself alone. She may sue and be sued and make contracts as freely and independently as an unmarried woman or a man. She may sell or transfer her real as well as her personal property just as she chooses. And she is not liable for her husband's debts or obliged to contribute to his support. Meanwhile, a husband is obliged to support his wife and children. He is liable for the price of all 'necessaries' purchased by her, and for money borrowed by her for their purchase; and 'necessaries' are liberally construed as 'commensurate with her husband's means, her wonted living as his spouse, and her station in the community.'
>
> A man who obtains a divorce cannot ask for alimony; a woman who obtains one is entitled to it, and to continue to receive it even if she remarries. A woman in business cannot be arrested in an action for a debt fraudulently contracted, as a man may be. Every woman enjoys certain exemptions from the sale of her property under execution, but only a man who has and provides for a household or family is exempt in the same way. A woman is entitled to one-third of her husband's real estate at his death, and cannot be deprived of it by will; and no real estate can be sold by him during his lifetime unless she signs off this dower right. A husband's right to a portion of his wife's property begins only after the birth of a living child, and even then she need not have his consent to sell it during her lifetime, and may deprive him of it altogether by will."

While one "forbears threatenings," it is worth while to wonder whether this would go on if the relations of the sexes to each other were changed. Courtesies that are compelled by law would soon become onerous. Instincts that were required by statute would become irksome, until they were laid aside. A man jostled at the polls and in the primary meetings would be less inclined to step aside or stand up elsewhere to give a woman place.

The almost uniform method of confusing questions, resorted to so constantly in the attacks of the woman suffragists, must be protested against to the end. Giving a woman the ballot has nothing whatever to do with her higher education, with her choice of occupations, with the part she may take in the discussion of public questions, or with her share in the administration of public interests. Along the lines of their distinctive ability, and in the ways of their natural adaptation, no sane man questions the wisdom and the duty of the highest education for women, of the freest following out of their vocations, of the importance of their intelligent knowledge, and the value of their expressed opinions in great moral and social public questions, and of their capacity in certain offices of responsibility, duty and trust.

So far as to principles, and fairness of methods in argument. And now for the appeal to serious men and women, for the serious consideration of this most serious question. The appeal is rightly made, first, in behalf of the women of America who are earnestly opposed to the imposition

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"...a woman who will sell her purity, her honor, her reputation, herself, will sell anything, [including] a vote...purchasable by the highest bidder."

upon them of a burden which, from their point of view, not only is *not* a duty, but *is* an evil; not only not a right, but actually a wrong. It is very easy, by the process that is sometimes called "counting noses," to say that this is a matter of minorities, and that majorities must rule. But, like many other arguments in favor of this cause, the statement is based upon the "take-things-for-granted" plan. Given a large body of earnest agitators (some of them paid agents who live by the agitation), and everybody knows that numberless signatures may be obtained to a petition for almost anything—names of indifferent, unintelligent, brow-beaten and button-holed people, who sign rather than argue, and assent in the spirit of lazy complaisance, rather than offend the asker by refusing. Such signatures mean nothing, although they swell the number into a more than millenary petition, and make it more or less miles long. Not for a moment disputing the fact that some of the names stand for intelligence and intention, for conviction and conscience, that they represent education, social position, tax-paying interest, I claim, from my own large and long experience, that, in any community with which I am acquainted, the most serious, intelligent, cultivated women, with the largest money interest in the government, and the most quiet, thoughtful, earnest women, are, conscientiously and on clear convictions, opposed to woman suffrage. I insist that it is a wrong to force such women to the alternative of going to the polls, against their instincts and their convictions, *or* of allowing the unthinking majority of votes to be enlarged by the ballots of women carried away by a theory, or influenced by a desire for power. What the result would be is matter of conjecture; but my conviction is that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to bring the great mass of really intelligent and responsible women to vote, against their ingrained habits, their instincts, their inclinations, and their judgments. And it is important to stop and consider what that means. The old proverb applies here of the horse dragged to the water, which cannot be made to drink. Legislation may be secured that will say to every woman: "You *shall* have the privilege of voting"; but, after all, it means only "may," and you cannot put the verb into the imperative and say: "You *shall* vote."

There are two factors of grave danger in the political issues and elections of America. First of all, the religious question, which, guard it as we will, crops up from time to time, in appropriations to charities or schools or religious organizations, or in fanatical fury against some form of religious order and belief. There have been two noted instances, at least, in which the danger has been shadowed forth in the arraying of Protestants against Roman Catholics. In one case, the violent stirring up of Protestant women about a school question produced an angry contest, in which the Protestants carried the day; while in the other, after a careful canvass, quietly made among Protestant women, the summons of a single Roman priest mustered a force of female voters, always liable to be controlled by clerical direction, which carried the day for Rome. And the dregs and debris of the contest were bitter and wretched to a degree. It is to the infinite honor of women that they are more quickly interested, more keenly concerned, and more deeply influenced in their religious feelings and convictions than men. But it adds to the wrong and horror of allowing religion to be dragged into politics, if, on one side or the other, a great body of voters could be wielded by any religious or ecclesiastical influence to decide the question and carry the day.

The other factor, known and read of all men, is the venal voter—the man whose ballot is for sale to the highest bidder. The possession of the ballot has not purified the male voter from the heinous sin of a sold vote. Why should it purify the woman? It is a well-known fact that, in all our large cities, there is a great body of women who sell themselves, soul and body. It is idle to stop and say that men are responsible for this horror. I have no desire to screen men. I believe the man who sins against purity is before God a sinner equally with the woman. But the fact stands that a woman who will sell her purity, her honor, her reputation, herself, will sell anything. And in the city of New York, with its fifty thousand fallen women, there is this enormous and awful possibility of a vote that might turn the tide of any election, purchasable by the highest bidder, who would naturally use his disreputable bargain for disreputable and dangerous ends. By some strange confusion of infantile innocence, unimaginable ignorance of facts, or malicious interpretation of words, men who have called attention to this danger have been accused of insulting their wives and mothers, or of implying that Mrs. Cady Stanton or Miss Anthony would sell her vote. But this sort of answer is only the action of the cuttle-fish which hides its method of escape, or the dust of the fleeing animal which blinds the eyes of its pursuer. The hideous fact of the number of degraded and venal women remains. The awful fact of venal voters among men remains; and of the equally criminal class of political go-betweens, who spend the money of candidates and corporations in these most illegitimate "election expenses." And the possibility and probability of the increase of a corrupted ballot giving, in a close election, the balance of power, secured by a purchase of the votes of women lost to all sense of shame, follows as an immediate and inevitable danger.

It is constantly urged that women voters would be more conscientious and careful than men are, would be always on the side of reform, would advance the interests of temperance and of all great moral and social move-

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ments. But, in the first place, this is purely prophetic, without the inspiration of prophecy. It is mere guesswork. To reach a real conclusion through an imaginary premiss is illogical to the last degree. There are, perhaps in smaller proportion, bad women as well as bad men, intemperate women, ignorant women. In the comparisons usually made by the advocates of woman's suffrage, it is always the virtuous and intelligent woman who is contrasted with the ignorant and unprincipled man. The fact is, that to multiply suffrage means to multiply *every kind of vote* by two, and while it would mean an increase of votes cast on principle and for principle, it would also mean an increase of unprincipled votes against the best interests of society. It is greatly to be doubted whether politics, either in its methods or in its results, would be purified in this way. The giving of the ballot to men has not improved either the morals or the responsibility of men. Why should it make women more moral or more responsible? Voting, after all, is to a large degree *by* parties and *for* individuals, and there is no such violence of partizanship in the world as the violence of female partizanship. No one who has heard a good "Primrose League lady" in England abuse Mr. Gladstone will question this. And the condition of feeling in the South during and since the war is a painful evidence of it. It was the women of the South who fanned the flame of secession, who forced the continuance of the hopeless strife, and who to-day, where there is any spirit of out-and-out sectionalism, are the unrelenting, unforgetting, unforgiving Southerners. This relation of the Southern women to the war is a serious note of warning, in another direction, about "the woman in politics." There can be no doubt that women in the South knew more, thought more, felt more, talked more about politics than the women of the North. And what was the result and effect of their intelligent interest? Slavery and the slave laws, with all their frightful possibilities, maintained in the time of peace, and sectionalism run mad when the opportunity for the war came!

There are two other considerations which cannot be omitted in the study of this subject, the family relation, and the relation between men and women in the world. To-day, in the household, the man is the voter. Suppose the wife becomes a voter too. She will either reproduce her husband's political views, and there would be in one house *two* Democratic voters, and in another *two* Republican voters, where there had been one. And this is no gain towards a decision of questions. It is only a multiplying of ballots, producing no change of results. Or else the wife would take the opposite side from her husband's, and, instantly, with all the heat and violence of party differences and political disagreements, a bone of contention is introduced into the home; a new cause of dissension and alienation is added to the already strained relations in many families. Then there is the question of mistress and maid. Shall the cook leave her kitchen to cast a vote, which shall counterbalance the vote of the mistress, or shall the employer undertake to control the politics of the "kitchen cabinet"? And all this, not merely on the voting day, or in the deposit of the ballot, but the weeks before and after the election are to be spent in the heat of discussion, or in the smart of defeat. The American home is not too sacred and secure to-day to make it safe to undermine it with the explosive materials of politics and partisanship. And meanwhile, as things are now, the intelligent woman, interested in some great measure of reform, has in her hand, not the ability to rival, offset, or double her husband's vote, but the power of her persuasion, her affection, her ingenuity, to influence it. It would be incredible, if it were not shown to be true, that any large number of thinking and intelligent beings, knowing, feeling, using, this tremendous power, should be willing to run the risk of losing it, by substituting a thing far lower and feebler in its stead. And with the experience of what she has gained for her sex, with the evidence of what voting men have brought about for her under the influence of non-voting women, and through solicitude for their interests, the rashness of this proposed experiment defies description.

It is perfectly idle to imagine that the relation between men and women in the outside world can remain the same when their attitude to each other is so entirely changed. With women mingling in the rough strifes and contests of political life, and assuming positions and duties hitherto unknown to them, there will inevitably come the quenching of that chivalrous feeling of men towards women, born of the protection hitherto expected by women and afforded by men, which is the inspiring cause of so large a part of the amenities of life and the politeness of manners. And yet, just because woman is physically weak, and man physically strong, there will be no change in the real necessities of things. One may well look with grave anxiety at what is really *a revolution of* the natural order, utterly unable to conjecture what the results may be when women shall have become, not only *votresses*, but legisla*tresses*, mayor*esses*, and alder*women*. It is the favorite habit of women arguing this cause to deal with it as though woman's suffrage were an *evolution*. But it cannot fairly be considered as, in any way, a progress along the line of that steady advance in the power and position of women, which has been wrought out by Christian civilization. It would not be progress, it would be retrogression. And it is not the least after the manner of growth and improvement in the character, the education, or the opportunities of women. It is a new departure; an entire digression; a violent change, and the appeal of this article is in a way "from Philip drunk to Philip sober." Certain women have said so loudly, and so often, that they are "enslaved," "reduced to a level with idiots," "classed with criminals," "deprived of natural rights," "down-trodden and oppressed," that they have really come to believe it and to make some sensible people believe it. I trust that wiser counsels may in the end prevail. Meanwhile, inasmuch as the active agitators for this radical revolution in the very fundamental elements of government, have resorted to every known means to secure their ends, I cannot but feel, that, however the other women may shrink from the publicity, it is their bounden duty by influence, by argument, by petition, to "fight fire with fire"; to see to it that, in the approaching elections for the Senate and Assembly of the State of New York, men shall be chosen who will defend them from this wrong; and when the elections are completed, to let it be known and felt in Albany that what some women claim as a political right, they consider a personal grievance and a public harm. □

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THE WOMAN QUESTION:

2. Image and Self-Image

54 (October 1868) Modern Women, and What Is Said of Them, *by A.G. Sedgwick*

56 (October 1869) The Subjection of Women, *by William James*

58 (April 1860) *From* Woman's Right to Labor, *by Andrew P. Peabody*

61 (May 1894) The New Woman, *by Ouida (Marie Louise de la Ramée)*

62 (November 1900) *From* Retrogression of the American Woman, *by Flora McDonald Thompson*

63 (December 1900) *From* Progress of the American Woman, *by Elizabeth Cady Stanton*

65 (May 1902) *From* Woman and Her Sphere, *by the Duchess of Sutherland*

66 (May 1920) A Plea for First-Class Women, *by Mary Sargent Potter*

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A. G. SEDGWICK

Modern Women, & What Is Said of Them

1868

Modern Women, and what is said of them. A Reprint of a Series of Articles in the "Saturday Review," with an Introduction by MRS. LUCIA GILBERT CALHOUN. New York: J.S. Redfield. 1868. 12mo. pp.371.

From all sides we hear lamentable accounts of the present state of society: that the French *salons* are dying out, or have already ceased to exist; that the race of English conversers is disappearing; that in this country such representatives of the old Knickerbocker and Puritan families as are still to be found hold themselves aloof from intercourse, except with their fellows, other Knickerbockers and Puritans, and live in good works and a regretful remembrance of a society of which their grandmothers were members. That the Prince of Wales delights in "Champagne Charley" is a small matter, but that all England is delighted with it is alarming; that the *demi-monde* has always existed is undeniable, but that its fashions should be copied by innocent women is startling: and so of this country we may say that people who have no objection to the waltz are displeased with the German. And now comes the "Saturday Review," and tells us that the "girl of the period" is a creature who dyes, paints, and enamels,—studies the arts of vice, that she may render herself attractive to those accustomed to its pleasures,—is immodest in dress, behavior, and conversation,—and whose whole object in life is to marry the man who, of all she knows, has the largest fortune and the least brains. "The girl of the period is a creature who dyes her hair and paints her face, as the first articles of her personal religion,—whose sole idea of life is plenty of fun and luxury,—and whose dress is the object of such thought and intellect as she possesses. Her main endeavor in this is to outvie her neighbors in the extravagance of fashion." "If there is a reaction against an excess of Rowland's Macassar, and hair shiny and sticky with grease is thought less nice than if left clean and heathily crisp, she dries and frizzes and sticks hers out on end like certain savages in Africa, or lets it wander down her back like Madge Wildfire's, and thinks herself all the more beautiful, the nearer she approaches in look to a maniac or a negress. With purity of taste, she has lost also that far more precious purity and delicacy of perception which sometimes mean more than appears on the surface. What the *demi-monde* does in its frantic efforts to excite attention she also does in imitation. If some fashionable *dévergondée en évidence* is reported to have come out with her dress below her shoulder-blades, and a gold strap for all the sleeve thought necessary, the girl of the period follows suit next day, and then wonders that men sometimes mistake her for her prototype, or that mothers of girls not quite so far gone as herself refuse her as a companion for their daughters." "At whatever cost of shocked self-love or pained modesty it may be, it cannot be too plainly told to the modern English girl that the net result of the present manner of life is to assimilate her as nearly as possible to a class of women whom we must not call by their proper—or improper—name." This of course touches England primarily, but concerns us also. The same complaints are made here,—less in degree, but in kind the same; since the days of the "Potiphar Papers," every Saratoga and Newport season has brought to light an increasing love of luxury, fastness, and display.

These articles from the "Saturday Review" are not so clever as the attention they have received gives one the right to expect,—an attention, indeed, aroused as much by the fierceness of the attack as by anything else. And then, as one of the essays points out, any criticism of woman, however analytic and temperate, excites to hot activity an *esprit de corps* which is not to be found in any other body. Handle man as severely as you please, and he will only laugh; but avoid the subject of feminine character, if you do not wish to obtain the reputation of being both a fool and a barbarian. Most of the papers are in the ordinary "Saturday Review" manner,—and a most wearisome manner it is, when you have a book full of it,—with here and there a clever hit, such as this (p. 214): "Woman alone keeps up the private family warfare which in the earlier stages of society required all the energies of man"; or this (p. 259), *á propos* of the *esprit de corps* just alluded to: "Women certainly present the only analogy in the present day to that claim of internal jurisdiction for which the Church struggled so gallantly in the Middle Ages. No one who sees the serried ranks with which she encounters all investigation from without would imagine the severity with which she administers justice within." The most striking of these papers is that called the "Girl of the Period," and it seems to us to have been written by some one who had no hand in the others, or at any rate wrote very little of the book. The style is quite different from the regular style of the social essay; and if any of the papers are to be attributed to a woman, it may as well be this one,—though, to be sure, there is no special need of going so far to seek an author, for even this might have been written by a great many people, and the whole question of the authorship of the book is not likely to become a very vital one, until something more important shall be produced by the same hands.

"Modern Women" is a tirade against modern Englishwomen, and parenthetically against modern women of other nations: we have already given a specimen of the charges. We hear these accusations in America as well, and it behooves us to examine the foundation of them, that we may discover whether or no they are true, and, if

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true, what the remedy should be. In plain English, are we going to the Devil? Will the Saratoga woman of ten years hence be such a woman as the "Saturday Review" describes in these terms: "Belladonna flashes from her eyes, kohl and antimony deepen the blackness of her eyebrows, 'bloom of roses' blushes from her lips"? Is she of this sort now? If our politicians are every year becoming more and more corrupt, our theatres every year more and more indecent, and our society more and more abandoned in its luxury and frivolity, we shall very soon reach a point at which there will be little security for life or property,—if that in some quarters of the country has not been reached already. The soberest of American cities has had its winter's excitement furnished by the *Cancan*, the officers of the law in New York act or remain inactive according to the relative length of the plaintiffs' and defendants' purses, while the hot whirl of Newport and Saratoga serves as a ready Lethe for all moral obligations. A rather disheartening picture might be drawn in this way of our probable future; and yet we cannot believe in its truth.

The question is, What amount of influence do the forces called social exert upon the general current of thought and upon the general moral tone of the country? We cannot say how it is in England or France, (which latter country, we suspect, has furnished most of the material for these essays,) but in America this influence is, on the whole, slight. If "society" here were in the hands of the older and more prominent men and women, in the hands of our great bankers and great orators and great merchants and their wives, the extravagance and stupidity of which we hear so much might fairly be expected to beget extravagance and stupidity among all orders and classes, and those who believed a general reign of corruption and inanity to be approaching would probably form a majority of the thinking public. If the people who by their standing attract the attention and mould the fashion of the masses are sensual in their tastes and low in their aims, the rest of the people will, by coming under their influence, become like them. They say, that, when the "Beggar's Opera" was first performed in London, Sir Robert Walpole, then minister, and well known to be bribing to the right and to the left, was in a stage box. On the singing of the following air of Lockit's, all eyes were turned on Sir Robert, and the air was encored:—

When you censure the age,
Be cautious and sage,
  Lest the courtiers offended should be;
If you mention vice or bribe,
'T is so pat to all the tribe
  That each cries, That was levelled at me!

"Sir Robert, observing the pointed manner in which the audience applied the last line to him, parried the thrust by encoring it with his single voice, and thus not only blunted the poetical shaft, but gained a general huzza from the audience." And there can be no doubt that Walpole lowered the tone of London society by the clever audacity which gained him the huzza.

But if you seek the leaders of society in America, you do not find them in the statesmen, the orators, the presidents of colleges, but in boys of twenty-two with a good faculty for dancing, and girls of twenty just home from Paris. Or if you look for maturity, you may find it in the person of some broken-down stock-gambler, known by his fast horses and disreputable life. Even these last are in a small minority; the crowd is young, and it is the youth of the crowd, and its consequently uninfluential character, upon which we wish to dwell. A generation in our society lasts three or at the outside four years, and it is only at the close of their social career that our young men and women begin to have any influence in directing the current of thought or action at all. The number of persons who in any large American city are at once prominent members of "society," and also prominent in public life or business of any kind, can be counted on the fingers of one hand. And it is very easy to see that prominence as a cotillion dancer and prominence as a human being are really incompatible, for it requires all the energies of one's nature to be prominent in either capacity. If any one wishes to realize the truth of these statements, let him pause a moment and reflect upon his probable sensations on being told that some eminent public lecturer in the United States was in the habit of spending his summer afternoons in driving on the Avenue at Newport, and his winter evenings in leading the German at Delmonico's. The fact is, that all young American men and women, who have any ambition or desire to serve mankind, leave "society" as soon as they arrive at years of discretion; and the result is, that "society" is composed of those who have not yet reached years of discretion and those who never will do so,—a society not very likely to mould opinion at large, or in the long run to damage the cause of morality with those who remain out of it.

Let us say, that, in making these remarks, we are not speaking of any society other than that which is known by this name in our large cities, which is recognized as such by reporters of newspapers at Long Branch or Saratoga,—the only "society," properly speaking, in America. There is, indeed, a larger meaning in the word, which permits it sometimes to include any association of men and women for purposes of pleasure or instruction,—a meaning which would hardly exclude lectures or "readings," and would certainly comprehend "talking parties." But this is not "society." It cannot be too often repeated that society in America means the "German."

It is very difficult to substantiate what we have said, because, from the fact that the influence of society on opinion is so small, special instances of its weakness are hard to find. We are obliged to appeal to the general sense of the public, and we ask whether we are not borne out in our assertion that the people who really direct and change the direction of the movements of thought and feeling in the United States are people outside the social "ring"; that the occupations of "society" are such as to preclude men and women of real importance and character from taking part in its amusements; that it is composed chiefly of boys and girls; that the older persons who remain in it do so because they are not sufficiently wise to desire to be elsewhere; and, finally, that, on account of all these things, Newport, Saratoga, and the Fifth Avenue are of vastly less importance than they are commonly reputed to be. □

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WILLIAM JAMES

The Subjection of Women

1869

2.—1. *Women's Suffrage; the Reform against Nature.* By HORACE BUSHNELL. New York: Charles Scribner & Co. 1869.
2. *The Subjection of Women.* By JOHN STUART MILL. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1869.

English style is distinguished by the atmosphere of homely splendor, of familiar pomp, of surcharged association, in which its words move. The sentences unroll themselves deliberately, seeming to listen to their own progress, now packing volumes of meaning into a simple word, now yielding to passing suggestions and incorporating into their mass epithets and clauses which writers of other nations would neglect as collateral and exuberant fancies. The secret of this peculiarly English richness of movement has been kept by Dr. Bushnell, perhaps, more steadily than by any other of our contemporary writers. Mr. Mill's sentences, clean, weighted, and going straight to their mark, would, if translated literally, sound as natural and forcible to French, German, or Italian ears as they do to ours. But Dr. Bushnell's, in any tongue but our own, would have an outlandish air. To take an example at random: "Where we touch the limits of reason, they [women] touch the limits of excess; where we are impetuous in a cause, they are uncontrollable in it. We know how, as men, to be moderated in part, by self-moderation, even as ships by their helms in all great storms at sea; for the other part we had women kept in moderation by their element, even as ships in harbor lie swinging by their anchors; but now we get even less of help from these than they do from us." The reef on which the old English style often split came from an excess of this self-listening, and the result was affectation, or, to use the vulgar term, *mouthing*. And Dr. Bushnell with his rich fancy has not steered clear of the reef. A clerical training always tends to make a diffuse writer, and we think that "Women's Suffrage" would have been a more solid book if its author's remarkable powers of *ex*pression had been a little balanced by some cultivation of a correlative power of *re*pression. As it is, he is redundant and careless, not to say often vulgar; as in such phrases as, "the Duchess of Devonshire was a high-life conventional kind of woman."

Dr. Bushnell's thesis is, that although the present status of women is in many respects one of wrongful "abridgment," and although they ought to have facilities for education and occupation opened to them in many hitherto untried ways, society should nevertheless make a resolute stand against admitting them to share in any sort of "government." Preachers they may be, but not pastors or presbyters or bishops; attorneys, but neither advocates nor judges. "Administration" of any kind in which authority is implied lies without their province,—most of all, the holding of political office, and the exercise of the suffrage. This weighty conclusion is derived from a conception of the essential nature of woman and of government, expressed in an infinite variety of ways throughout the book. She is not "created" to mingle in any kind of strife, or "to batter the severities of fortune. . . . All government belongs to men. . . . Where agreement is impossible, one of the two clearly must decide, and it must be the man. The woman's law . . . requires it of her . . . to submit herself to his fortunes. . . . If he has no sway-force in him . . . to hold the reins, he is no longer what Nature means when she makes a man." Women are "naturally subject," "subordinate," meant to yield to evil and violence, not to combat them with answering evil and violence. So far so good. If Dr. Bushnell is contented to urge this as an ideal, a matter of inexplicable sentiment, he remains in a strong position. The universal sense of mankind hitherto, and its almost universal sense now, will uphold him. But he is naturally tempted to illustrate the doctrine and enforce it by arguments derived from different orders of considerations, which to our mind are far from making it more imposing; but rather, being unsound themselves, tend to infect it with their own decay, and so undo the authority it possesses in its brute dogmatic form.

The first and chief of these arguments is, that the subordination of women, instead of implying their inferiority, "gives them, morally considered, the truest and sublimest conditions of ascendancy; . . . woman has her government as truly as man," namely, "by grace." It is to his as the gospel is to the law, "and accomplishes just what the law, in that it was weak, could not accomplish. . . . The honors of womanhood lie in gentleness and patience, or it may be the dreadful lot of violence and tyrant cruelty endured." Her supreme glory is to be a "subject nature, . . . milder, truer, and closer to the type of God's own dear submissions in the cross of his Son," than our "coarse forbidding masculinities" will let us attain. This is nothing but the good old Catholic doctrine, invented when people were hopeless of an order to be realized in this world, that suffering is a higher vocation than action. It has done much good in its day,—saved many a slave from envy and despair, and consoled sick men in all ages of the world. But there has probably not been an unjust usage in Christendom which has not at some time sought shelter under its wing. No well man or free man ever adopted it for his own use. Protestantism has practically almost abandoned it in its generality. Dr. Bushnell himself probably makes no wider application of

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it than to the present case. And we have little doubt, if the truth were known, that he would be found loath in his own person to exchange, even if he could, the power which his "coarse masculinities" endow him with, for the inestimable privileges of this sort of government by self-sacrifice. Modern civilization, rightly or wrongly, is bent on developing itself along the line of justice, and any defense of woman's position on ascetic principles will fall with little weight on the public ear. One smiles, and thinks of the author's own words, in another part of his book, as one listens to him "protesting his natural admirations, his zeal to serve and protect, the profuseness of his attentions, and the unstinted tribute of respect and deference he is always wont to render." This gallantry makes after all but a poor compensation to women for that restricted moral development which the limitation of the field of their responsibilities imposes on them.

Let us then cancel this particular reasoning in favor of women's abstinence from politics. Dr. Bushnell is immediately ready with another argument. It is that involved in the first of our quotations from him, to the effect that women now are something, but if allowed to meddle with government they will become less than nothing. The peculiar "grace" of their nature is so very tender and evanescent that it requires the most carefully adapted medium or "element" to save it from degenerating into mere repulsiveness. The divinity of which we have just been hearing so much is, we are surprised to learn, artificial; so that so simple an act as that of voting will sweep it away and leave not a rack behind. Feminine beauty we have long known to be but skin-deep; it was reserved for Dr. Bushnell to proclaim emphatically and categorically that the very essence of what we call the feminine character is of equally epidermic constitution. The portraits he untiringly draws, of women as they will appear after twenty-five years' enjoyment of the ballot, are almost too harrowing to quote. Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds, and accordingly, whereas the "thunder" that clothes man's neck (our author never wearies of this "thunder" attribute of masculinity) looks rather well upon *him*, woman's "look will be sharp, her voice wiry and shrill, her action angular and abrupt; wiliness, self-asserting boldness, and eagerness for place and power" will ravage her once fair form. As for her moral state, "the strange facility of debasement and moral abandonment" which characterizes her will make her corruptions much worse than ours. Terrible hints are given, of the naughtinesses to which women will resort in order to procure votes, and the demoralization which will take place in country districts, where the voters, male and female, "will be piled in huge wagons to be carried to the polls, and will sometimes on their return encounter a storm that drives them into wayside taverns and other like places for the night; where"—but enough; the curious reader may find the rest of the passage on page 149. But the worst of the change in her is, that it is all to no purpose. The position for which she has abandoned her proper point of sway is one in which she is sure miserably to miscarry. Throwing away all she has, to clutch at a shadow, she ends with nothing; and her appearance, "sharp-featured, lank, and dry," will but reflect "the disappointment of an over-instigated nature," conscious of its own ridiculousness. Unhappy Dr. Bushnell! thus to supersaturate with the bitterness of this affront all the sweetness of compliment with which he previously smothered the sex! At their hands, not ours, must he receive his doom. We cannot help noticing, however, as we pass, how common this two-stool line of argument is in the school to which Dr. Bushnell belongs,—first, a vociferous proclamation of the utter and radical peculiarity of the womanly nature; then a nervous terror of its being altered from its foundations by a few outward changes. Mr. Mill's belief in the power of education is timid in comparison with this.

A chapter entitled "The Report of History" undertakes to show that wherever women have meddled with political affairs the result has been disastrous. Some of the examples strike us as unfortunately chosen. Delilah, Herodias, and the mistresses of Louis the Fifteenth would to our minds serve better as arguments in favor of educating women politically, and giving them the feeling of responsibility. The strongest of all "women's-rights" arguments is, that women are frivolous because they are irresponsible.

We have not space to follow the reverend author into further detail. We will just mention, however, the remedy he proposes, for much of the present dissatisfaction. It is, that "the almost colic stringency" of women's modesty may be "relaxed." Marriage is her true sphere; and, as three quarters of the men who are bachelors are so from timidity, the women should be allowed without impropriety to encourage them by making matrimonial advances themselves, when feeling prompts it.

On the whole, it does not seem to us that the author has very vividly realized the practical importance of the matter he has undertaken to discuss, or that his essay is a very serious contribution to the literature of the subject. The word "frivolity" little consorts with the reverend character; and yet it seems as if manly earnestness ought to dictate some less hollow utterances than these, ought at any rate to lead a writer to feel the facts more truly, and discern where the true *puncta dolorosa* of the disorder lie. We must close upon the note with which we began,—style. The little book leaves on one a strong impression that rhetoric—the mere delight of listening to one's self making sweet music—was an important motive in its production. Even in that respect it cannot be considered wholly a success, and it certainly will add nothing in any circle to Dr. Bushnell's reputation either as a thinker or as an advocate.

If Dr. Bushnell's writing advances, tacking and fluttering with the *allure* of an iridescent butterfly, Mr. Mill launches his smashing projectile straight through every intervening obstacle to its goal. Few books were ever written with so few waste sentences. There is, indeed, an air of hot vehemence about it, to which one is not quite accustomed in its author, and which leaves an impression as of a sore subject, long pent up and brooded over in his mind, and published under a sudden passionate determination that, come what may, he will hold his peace no longer. This amount of feeling has led him, we think, in one or two places to press his arguments beyond the point at which, in a subject that he looked at more coolly, he would probably have stopped: as when, for example, he maintains that we are at present all but absolutely igno-

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rant of the true mental characteristics of woman. It even makes him guilty of something like special pleading, as where he attempts to show that we have no good ground for thinking women to be naturally less fitted for original production in music than men. In fact there runs through the whole book a sort of quibble on the expression "*nature* of women." The main-stay of his thesis is, that there is nothing fixed in character, but that it may, through the education of a sufficient number of generations, be produced of any quality to meet the demand; yet nevertheless he keeps speaking of woman's present condition as a distorted and "unnatural" one. "Undesirable" is the only word he can consistently use. His belief in the omnipotence of education leaves him logically free to admit any amount of *present* native diversity in the average mental aptitudes of the sexes, since that would not on his hypothesis be essential or final. As it is, his somewhat nervous anxiety to efface even the present distinction leads him into extremes where numbers—even of those who fully sympathize with his practical aims—will not care to follow, and deprives the book, in adverse eyes, of that wonderful fairness which has always been the secret of Mr. Mill's power to convince.

The "woman question" has hitherto been in the main a practical one. The etiolated and stunted condition of single women on the one hand, and the interests of order in the family on the other, have been the chief points of attack by the reformers, and retort by the conservatives. On purely sentimental grounds no well-organized warfare has as yet been waged, since both parties have not seemed unwilling on the whole to recognize the same standard. We cannot help thinking, accordingly, that the most noteworthy feature of this in all respects noteworthy book is its thorough hostility to the accepted sentimental ideal of the personal intercourse of man and wife.

If we have not misconceived the matter, Mr. Mill's ideal is a new one, to this country as well as to Europe. Much of what he attacks exists here but in feeble form. The legal abuses are in large measure obsolete; the element of brutality which he makes so prominent in the masculine feeling of superiority is foreign; American husbands are as a rule less sensitive about their wives occupying a position of independent publicity than those of whom Mr. Mill writes; and Mrs. Grundy is not the tyrannical reality to American which she is to English matrons. But bating all this, the sentimental kernel of the essay is revolutionary even here. It is true that the author does not force his sentiment into the foreground, and *deduce* from it as frankly as its importance would justify. But it lurks as a hidden premise in all his reasoning, and, incidentally, is abundantly expressed. It is what furnishes that intense contempt for our actual arrangements which gives such a headlong character to his work; and as we just now likened the latter to a projectile, we may liken this feeling to the powder whose explosion supplies the velocity with which it speeds.

A sentimental ideal of this sort is of course too evanescent and subtle to be stated in scientific black-and-white; but we will bring together a number of disconnected passages from the book, and the reader will easily feel out from them what we mean: "If the family in its best forms is, as it is often said to be, a school of sympathy, tenderness, and loving forgetfulness of self, it is still oftener, as respects its chief, a school of wilfulness, overbearingness, unbounded self-indulgence, and a double-dyed and idealized selfishness, of which sacrifice itself is only a

Andrew P. Peabody (1860)

from a review of *"Woman's Right to Labor;" or Low Wages and Hard Work*, by Caroline H. Dall

In looking back, it must always be the wonder of history that woman has maintained her integrity so well. In savage life she has always, by reason of her physical weakness, if from no other cause, been a slave; as civilization has advanced, her condition has improved; but how slowly, our own laws, customs, and statutes abundantly show. We need go no further back than our own common law, to see with what disabilities she has had to contend. It is true, that as to the inviolability of her person the common law has been eminently paternal. But not so as to her earnings and her estate. In this matter, woman has been almost as much an outlaw with us, as she was before the white man visited these shores. Witness the fact, that, under the common law, a married woman was, until of late, in those respects entirely banished from our courts. For all that best period of her life when as a wife and a mother she was charged with the most grave and onerous duties,—when, if ever, she needed all her earnings and all her property,— they were taken entirely from her and given to another. For all that time, she was declared incompetent to buy or to sell, to have or to hold, to earn or to collect, to grant or to devise, to assert any rights in court, or to exercise any of those rights of property so commonly accorded to the least of the family of man. Just at that period in her history when she was called to fulfil new duties and to sustain new obligations, and hence was standing in want of new rights and new guaranties and supports, the law took away even those that she had. When, if ever, she ought to have had full and entire possession and control of her real estate, and of its rents and profits, the law stepped in to commit the custody thereof entirely to her husband. When, if ever, she needed her personal property, the law intervened and gave it all to her lord and master. When, if ever, she should have been made free to work and enjoy the fruit of her labors, her earnings were all confiscated to her husband and his creditors. And all this, whether her husband was frugal or a spendthrift, sick or well, able to earn a support for her and her children, or dependent on her for the very bread that he and they craved and enjoyed. What ought to have added to her privileges and her immunities only served to subtract from them. The very act which

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particular form,—care for the wife and children being only care for them as parts of the man's own interests and belongings, and their individual happiness being immolated in every shape to his smallest preferences. There is nothing which men so easily learn as this self-worship. All privileged persons and all privileged classes have had it. The more we descend in the scale of humanity, the intenser it is. . . . We have had the morality of submission and the morality of chivalry and generosity; the time has come for the morality of justice. . . . The true virtue of human beings is fitness to live together as equals, . . . preferring whenever possible the society of those with whom leading and following can be alternate and reciprocal. . . . Any sentiment of freedom which can exist in a man, whose nearest and dearest intimacies are with those of whom he is absolute master, is not the genuine or Christian love of freedom, but what the love of freedom generally was in the ancients and in the Middle Ages,—an intense feeling of the dignity and importance of his own personality; making him disdain a yoke for himself of which he has no abhorrence whatever in the abstract, but which he is abundantly ready to impose on others for his own interest or glorification. . . . All the selfish propensities, the self-worship, the unjust self-preference, which exist among mankind have their source and root in, and derive their principal nourishment from, the present constitution of the relation between men and women. . . . The principle of the modern movement in morals and politics is, that conduct, and conduct alone, entitles to respect; that not what men are, but what they do, constitutes their claim to deference. . . . Intimate society between people radically dissimilar to one another is an idle dream. Unlikeness may attract, but it is likeness which retains; and in proportion to the likeness is the suitability of the individuals to give each other a happy life. . . . It is not with impunity that the superior in intellect shuts himself up with an inferior, and elects it for his sole completely intimate associate. Any society which is not improving is deteriorating, and the more so the closer and more familiar it is. . . . What marriage may be in the case of two persons of cultivated faculties, identical in opinions and purposes, between whom there exists that best kind of equality,—similarity of powers and capacities, with reciprocal superiority in them, so that each can enjoy the luxury of looking up to the other, and can have alternately the pleasure of leading and being led in the path of development,—I will not attempt to describe. To those who can conceive it there is no need; to those who cannot it will appear the dream of an enthusiast. But I maintain, with the profoundest conviction, that this, and this only, is the ideal of marriage."

Now all this is clearly inimical to the conception of a wife as a possession, as a finality. Independence is Mr. Mill's personal ideal, and his notion of love confounds itself with what is generally distinguished as friendship;—each party being able to subsist alone, and seeking a mate, not to supply an essential need, but to be enjoyed as a mere ally, or great moral luxury. We think that the ideal of the representative American is opposed to this. However he might shrink from expressing it in naked words, the wife his heart more or less subtly craves is at bottom a dependent being. In the outer world he can only hold good his position by dint of reconquering it afresh every day: life is a struggle where success is only relative, and all sanctity is torn off of him; where failure and humiliation, the exposure of weaknesses, and the

increased her need of property and the earnings of property, the very fact that increased her need of labor and the earnings of labor, outlawed her to all these rights and immunities. And with these were carried away the advantages and supports of credit.

However reasonable and proper these rules of law might have been in their origin, it is plain that, as applicable to us and our institutions, if the whole thing had been devised by a commission of lunatics, it could not have been more strangely at war with all the principles of thrift, or with all the maxims of prudence and justice. These old musty maxims of the common law have had their day, have retarded the prosperity of the world, have entailed enough of woe on women and all dependent upon them; and now, thanks to the progress of the age, are fast passing away. What is wanted is the abolition of all such laws, root and branch. Once place woman after marriage, as before, on the same footing with man as to all her rights and remedies in respect to her earnings and her property, and she need seek but little further. And until that is done, this government of ours can scarcely be called a government of equal laws.

The best way to bring all this about is, not by speeches and conventions, essays and arguments, but by statistics. Therein Mrs. Dall, in the book under notice, has commenced her work in the right spirit and in the right direction. Although evidently a woman of good literary culture, she has shown still higher capacity for her work, and a still better appreciation of the exact wants of the age, by leaving to others the abstract questions, and embodying in her Lectures a large amount of statistics that belong to the subject. It is a book of facts rather than of theories, a magazine of good working materials. The truth is, that the statistician is the great reformer. The logician and rhetorician are of little account any way in the work of human progress. One good telling column of figures, that shows how fields and fruits are lost and won, is worth a million of eloquent speeches on the same subject. A slate and pencil, as reformatory implements, are worth whole magazines of small pica, be they set in ever so taking a way.

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unmasking of pretence, are assured incidents: and he accordingly longs for one tranquil spot where he shall be valid absolutely and once for all; where, having been accepted, he is secure from further criticism, and where his good aspirations may be respected no less than if they were accomplished realities. In a word, the elements of security and repose are essential to his ideal; and the question is, Are they easily attainable without some feeling of dependence on the woman's side,—without her relying on him to be her mediator with the external world,—without his activity overlapping hers and surrounding it on almost every side, so that he makes as it were the atmosphere in which she lives?

Many men will answer No, peremptorily; for instance, Dr. Bushnell, who says: "When a woman has set herself up for a practical dittoship (*sic*) with men, refusing to accept the name of her husband, or have any but a partnership relation with him, she ceases so far to be woman at all. She has no longer the trusting nature; she despises it. She neither idolizes nor idealizes her husband. She has no homages looking up, any more than he in his ranges of force has courtesies to pay her, looking down. He is gruff and she is pungent, and the main sensibility of life is the friction of it." Another class of minds, less dogmatic than this author as to what is *a priori* "natural," will nevertheless make a half-sentimental, half-practical objection to Mr. Mill, somewhat as follows: "Love is now as common as friendship is rare. Mere mutual respect, and sympathy in some end objective to both parties, form but a weak tie in comparison with that flattering interplay of instincts,—egotism, since you prefer to call it so, on the one hand, and self-sacrifice on the other. Do you not, then, in attempting to eradicate these latter things, run the risk of sweeping away the main condition that now makes matrimonial affection so cheaply realizable?" Other sceptics still will add: "After all, does not a man's sympathy with his wife differ from his sympathy with his friend in *sphere* rather than quality, as implying a hierarchical arrangement? His sympathy with his wife is in interests purely personal, social ends including the founding of the family, and the minor practical matters of life; but *within that sphere* may there not be the most thorough equality?" It is true Mr. Mill says: "When the two persons both care for great objects, and are a help and encouragement to each other in whatever regards these, the minor matters on which their tastes may differ are not all-important to them; and there is a foundation for solid friendship, of an enduring character, more likely than anything else to make it through the whole of life a greater pleasure to each, to give pleasure to the other, than to receive it." (Page 174.) According to this, the most important requisite in an astronomer's wife is, that she should have a passion for astronomy. But it may be conscientiously doubted whether in the majority of cases, even where equality was fully believed in by both parties, agreement in the "minor matters" would not afford the surest basis for a lifelong harmony; and whether consequently any difference of taste or instinct in the sexes which tends to facilitate such agreement ought not still to be fostered by education.

There is one kind of aesthetico-sentimental objection frequently urged against any considerable change in woman's position, that we think has little weight. It is to the effect that what gallantry and chivalry are left among us will disappear. Thus Dr. Bushnell: "We observe a common-looking man, for example, standing, in a railroad car, that a common-looking woman may sit, and we say inwardly at least, if not audibly, there is yet after all some hope of the world. . . . These beautiful deferences and homages paid to women are the very best civilizers we have, and we can better afford to spare almost anything else." The assumption is that our yielding to women in small matters demands as *quid pro quo* on their part that they refrain from crossing our path in larger affairs; and that if they become our rivals in these latter, we shall no longer scruple to push them to the wall wherever we find them. This leaves altogether out of sight the mere animal potency of sex. An individual man, however his interests may clash with those of an individual woman, will always shrink from appearing personally like a brute in her presence.

We have laid such stress on his sentimental side of Mr. Mill's book, because here, more than anywhere else, a careless reader will be apt to miss its extremely revolutionary purport, and because, as we have already said, we regard it as the soul of the whole. Mr. Mill's sentiment about the marriage relation has for a necessary corollary divorce at will, with all the tremendous changes such divorce must entail upon the relation of children to society. Yet with that strange "air of suppression" which critics have complained of in him, he has passed these topics over in utter silence. It may be, he thinks his remedies will go farther when administered in divided doses, and that for the rest—utilitarian that he is—he is biding his time. But there are hosts of readers who feel that in this matter sentimental and practical considerations must go hand in hand, and whom timidity in the latter respect deters from trusting fully their instincts in the former. It were therefore much to be desired that Mr. Mill should publish his whole mind on the subject of divorce and of the family, without delay or reserve.

We shall not touch upon any of the other points the work presents, nor even say what they are; for it ought to be read by every one who cares in the least degree for social questions,—and who does not?—in its original form. No one can read it without feeling his thought stimulated and enlarged; numbers of those who are at present sceptical or indifferent will be converted by it; and many will be toughened in their resisting conservatism by the suggestive glimpse it affords of the ultimate tendencies of the democratic flood which is sweeping us along. It may be that Mr. Mill's fervid passion for absolute equality, "justice," and personal independence, as the *summum bonum* for every one, is a personal peculiarity. It may be that he is only more far-seeing than the majority, and that the wiping out of everything *special* in any man's relations to other men—of every moral tie that can possibly be conceived of as varying in varied circumstances, and therefore as artificial—is but the inexorable outcome of the path of progress on which we have entered. If this is so, there can be little doubt that this small volume will be what the Germans call "epoch-making," and that it will hereafter be quoted as a landmark signalizing one distinct step in the progress of the total evolution. □

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OUIDA

The New Woman

1894

It can scarcely be disputed, I think, that in the English language there are conspicuous at the present moment two words which designate two unmitigated bores: The Workingman and the Woman. The Workingman and the Woman, the New Woman, be it remembered, meet us at every page of literature written in the English tongue; and each is convinced that on its own especial W hangs the future of the world. Both he and she want to have their values artificially raised and rated, and a status given to them by favor in lieu of dessert. In an age in which persistent clamor is generally crowned by success they have both obtained considerable attention; is it offensive to say much more of it than either deserves? Your contributor avers that the Cow-Woman and the Scum-Woman, man understands; but that the New Woman is above him. The elegance of these appellatives is not calculated to recommend them to readers of either sex; and as a specimen of style forces one to hint that the New Woman who, we are told, "has been sitting apart in silent contemplation all these years" might in all these years have studied better models of literary composition. We are farther on told "that the dimmest perception that you may be mistaken, will save you from making an ass of yourself." It appears that even this dimmest perception has never dawned upon the New Woman.

We are farther told that "thinking and thinking" in her solitary sphynx-like contemplation she solved the problem and prescribed the remedy (the remedy to a problem!); but what this remedy was we are not told, nor did the New Woman apparently disclose it to the rest of womankind, since she still hears them in "sudden and violent upheavel" like "children unable to articulate whimpering for they know not what." It is sad to reflect that they might have been "easily satisfied at that time" (at what time?), "but society stormed at them until what was a little wail became convulsive shrieks"; and we are not told why the New Woman who had "the remedy for the problem," did not immediately produce it. We are not told either in what country or at what epoch this startling upheaval of volcanic womanhood took place in which "man merely made himself a nuisance with his opinions and advice," but apparently did quell this wailing and gnashing of teeth since it would seem that he has managed still to remain more masterful than he ought to be.

We are further informed that women "have allowed him to arrange the whole social system and manage or mismanage it all these ages without ever seriously examining his work with a view to considering whether his abilities and his methods were sufficiently good to qualify him for the task."

There is something deliciously comical in the idea, this suggested, that man has only been allowed to "manage or mismanage" the world because woman has graciously refrained from preventing his doing so. But the comic side of this pompous and solemn assertion does not for a moment offer itself to the New Woman sitting aloof and aloft in her solitary meditation on the superiority of her sex. For the New Woman there is no such thing as a joke. She has listened without a smile to her enemy's "preachments"; she has "endured poignant misery for his sins," she has "meekly bowed her head" when he called her bad names; and she has never asked for "any proof of the superiority" which could alone have given him a right to use such naughty expressions. The truth has all along been in the possession of woman; but strange and sad perversity of taste! she has "cared more for man than for truth, and so the whole human race has suffered!"

"All that is over, however," we are told, and "while on the one hand man has shrunk to his true proportions" she has, all the time of this shrinkage, been herself expanding, and has in a word come to "fancy herself" extremely. So that he has no longer the slightest chance of imposing upon her by his game-cock airs.

Man, "having no conception of himself as imperfect," will find this difficult to understand at first; but the New Woman "knows his weakness," and will "help him with his lesson." *"Man morally is in his infancy."* There have been times when there was a doubt as to whether he was to be raised to her level, or woman to be lowered to his, but we "have turned that corner at last and now woman holds out a strong hand to the child-man and insists upon helping him up." The child-man (Bismarck? Herbert Spencer? Edison? Gladstone? Alexander III.? Lord Dufferin? the Duc d'Aumale?) the child-man must have his tottering baby steps guided by the New Woman, and he must be taught to live up to his ideals. To live up to an ideal, whether our own or somebody else's, is a painful process; but man must be made to do it. For, oddly enough, we are assured that despite "all his assumption he does not make the best of himself," which is not wonderful if he be still only in his infancy; and he has the incredible stupidity to be blind to the fact that "woman has self-respect and good sense," and that "she does not in the least intend to sacrifice the privileges she enjoys on the chance of obtaining others."

I have written amongst other *pensées éparses* which will some day see the light, the following reflection:

L'école nouvelle des femmes libres oublée qu'on ne puisse pas a la fait combattre l'homme sur son propre terrain et attendre de lui des politesses, des tendresses et des galanteries. Il ne faut pas aux même moment prendre de l'homme son chaise à l'Université et sa

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RETROGRESSION OF THE AMERICAN WOMAN.

A strange people we are to ourselves, as we look backward to De Tocqueville's picture of us; and, compared with the American woman of De Tocqueville's time, the modern American woman is something more than strange. She has changed not alone with respect to outward form and manners, but in the whole underlying principle of her development she has so far departed from the ideals then logically set forth as indispensable to the continued growth of our national greatness, that the American woman of to-day appears to be the fatal symptom of a mortally sick nation.

> "In the United States, the inexorable opinion of the public carefully circumscribes the married woman within the narrow circle of domestic interests and duties, and forbids her to step beyond it. . .

So far from the modern American wife steadfastly pursuing the road to domestic happiness without ever turning back, divorce statistics have determined that the actual number of American women, during twenty years, who set out on the road to domestic happiness and did turn back, or were sent back, is 328,716. Of this number 67,685, or about one-fourth, turned back from causes involving immorality of woman, and in more than half the given instances of marriages dissolved for this cause, the law fixed the blame on the wife. . .

That the economically ideal organization of the American family has been overthrown by the aggressive spirit of the "new" woman appears with amazing clearness, placing De Tocqueville's view of the equality of the sexes in the United States of the earlier time in contrast with the facts of to-day:

> "In no country has such constant care been taken as in America to trace two clearly distinct lines of action for the two sexes, and to make them keep pace one with the other, but in two pathways which are always different. American women never manage the outward concerns of the family or conduct a business or take a part in political life; nor are they, on the other hand, ever compelled to perform the rough labor of the fields, or to make any of those laborious exertions which demand the exhaustion of physical strength. No families are so poor as to form an exception to this rule."

Directly to the contrary to-day, over seventeen per cent of the whole number of persons employed in all occupations are women. Furthermore, the United States Commissioner of Labor has found the number of women so employed to be constantly increasing, and that at the expense of men; the percentage of increase of women, in every given instance, showing a corresponding decrease of men. In this connection, still another suggestive fact appears in the statistics of the United States Department of Labor. In proportion as women advance in men's industries, and thus cause the retirement of men, the latter engage in domestic labor and personal service. The American woman competes with man, not alone to his disadvantage, but to his degradation. . .

FLORA McDONALD THOMPSON.
NOVEMBER 1900

*place dans l'omnibus; si on lui arrâche son gagnepain, on ne peut pas exiger qu'il offre aussi sa parapluie.**

The whole kernel of the question lies in this. Your contributor says that the New Woman will not surrender her present privileges; *i.e.*, she will still expect the man to stand that she may sit; the man to get wet through that she may use his umbrella. But if she retain these privileges she can only do so by an appeal to his chivalry, *i.e.*, by a confession that she is weaker than he. But she does not want to do this: she wants to get the comforts and concessions due to feebleness, at the same time as she demands the lion's share of power due to superior force alone. It is this overweening and unreasonable grasping at both positions which will end in making her odious to man and in her being probably kicked back roughly by him into the seclusion of a harem.

Before me lies an engraving in an illustrated journal of a woman's meeting; whereat a woman is demanding in the name of her sovereign sex the right to vote at political elections. The speaker is middle-aged and plain of feature; she wears an inverted plate on her head tied on with strings under her double-chin; she has balloon-sleeves, a bodice tight to bursting, a waist of ludicrous dimensions in proportion to her portly person; she is gesticulating with one hand, of which all the fingers are stuck out in ungraceful defiance of all artistic laws of gesture. Now, why cannot this orator learn to gesticulate and learn to dress, instead of clamoring for a franchise? She violates in her own person every law, alike of common-sense and artistic fitness, and yet comes forward as a fit and proper person to make laws for others. She is an exact representative of her sex.

Woman, whether new or old, has immense fields of culture untilled, immense areas of influence wholly neglected. She does almost nothing with the resources she possesses, because her whole energy is concentrated on desiring and demanding those she has not. She can write and print anything she chooses; and she scarcely ever takes the pains to acquire correct grammar or elegance of style before wasting ink and paper. She can paint and model any subjects she chooses, but she imprisons herself in men's *atéliers* to endeavor to steal their technique and their methods, and thus loses any originality she might possess. Her influence on children might be so great that through them she would practically rule the future of the world; but she delegates her influence to the vile school boards if she be poor, and if she be rich to governesses and tutors; nor does she in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred ever attempt to educate or control herself into fitness for the personal exercise of such influence. Her precept and example in the treatment of the animal creation might be of infinite use in mitigating the hideous tyranny of humanity over them, but she does little or nothing to this effect; she wears dead birds and the skins

* "The new school of liberated women forgets that you may not battle a man on his own turf and still expect his politeness, his affections, his gallantry. You needn't simultaneously remove a man from his chair at the university and his seat on the bus; if you steal his livelihood, you can't demand that he offer his umbrella."

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of dead creatures; she hunts the hare and shoots the pheasant, she drives and rides with more brutal recklessness than men; she watches with delight the struggles of the dying salmon, of the gralloched deer; she keeps her horses standing in snow and fog for hours with the muscles of their heads and necks tied up in the torture of the bearing rein; when asked to do anything for a stray dog, a lame horse, a poor man's donkey, she is very sorry, but she has so many claims on her already; she never attempts by orders to her household, to her *fournisseurs*, to her dependents, to obtain some degree of mercy in the treatment of sentient creatures and in the methods of their slaughter.

The immense area which lies open to her in private life is almost entirely uncultivated, yet she wants to be admitted into public life. Public life is already overcrowded, verbose, incompetent, fussy, and foolish enough without the addition of her in her sealskin coat with the dead humming bird on her hat. Woman in public life would exaggerate the failings of men, and would not have even their few excellencies. Their legislation would be, as that of men is too often, the offspring of panic or prejudice; and she would not put on the drag of common-sense as man frequently does in public assemblies. There would be little to hope from her humanity, nothing from her liberality; for when she is frightened she is more ferocious than he, and when she has power more merciless.

"Men," says your contributor, "deprived us of all proper education and then jeered at us because we had no knowledge." How far is this based on facts? Could not Lady Jane Grey learn Greek and Latin as she chose? Could not Hypatia lecture? Were George Sand or Mrs. Somerville withheld from study? Could not in every age every woman choose a Corinna or Cordelia as her type? become either Helen or Penelope? If the vast majority have not either the mental or physical gifts to become either, that was Nature's fault, not man's. Aspasia and Adelina Patti were born, not made. In all eras and all climes a woman of great genius or of great beauty has done what she chose; and if the majority of women have led obscure lives, so have the majority of men. The chief part of humanity is insignificant, whether it be male or female. In most people there is very little character indeed, and as little mind. Those who have much never fail to make their marks, be they of which sex they may.

The unfortunate idea that there is no good education without a college curriculum is as injurious as it is erroneous. The college education may have excellencies for men in its *frottement*, its preparation for the world, its rough destruction of personal conceit; but for women it can only be hardening and deforming. If study be delightful to a women, she will find her way to it as the hart to water brooks. The author of *Aurora Leigh* was not only always at home, but she was an invalid; yet she became a fine classic, and found her path to fame. A college curriculum would have done nothing to improve her rich and beautiful mind; it might have done much to debase it.

The perpetual contact of men with other men may be good for them, but the perpetual contact of women with other women is very far from good. The publicity of a college must be odious to a young girl of refined and delicate feeling.

PROGRESS OF THE AMERICAN WOMAN.

When machinery entered the home, to relieve woman's hands of the multiplicity of her labors, a new walk in life became inevitable for her. When our grandmothers made butter and cheese, dipped candles, dried and preserved fruits and vegetables, spun yarn, knit stockings, wove the family clothing, did all the mending of garments, the laundry work, cooking, patchwork and quilting, planting and weeding of gardens, and all the house-cleaning, they were fully occupied. But when, in course of time, all this was done by machinery, their hands were empty, and they were driven outside the home for occupation. If every woman had been sure of a strong right arm on which to lean until safe "on the other side of Jordan," she might have rested, content to do nothing but bask in the smiles of her husband, and recite Mother Goose melodies to her children. . .

The first step to be taken in the effort to elevate home life is to make provision for the broadest possible education of woman. Mrs. Thompson attributes the increasing number of divorces to the moral degeneracy of woman; whereas it is the result of higher moral perceptions as to the mother's responsibilities to the race. Woman has not heard in vain the warning voice of the prophets, ringing down through the centuries: "The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generations." The more woman appreciates the influences in prenatal life, her power in moulding the race, and the necessity for a pure, exalted fatherhood, the more divorces we shall have, until girls enter this relation with greater care and wisdom. When Naquet's divorce bill passed the French Chamber of Deputies, there were three thousand divorces asked for the first year, and most of the applicants were women. The majority of divorces in this country are also applied for by women. With higher intelligence woman has learned the causes that produce idiots, lunatics, criminals, degenerates of all kinds and degrees, and she is no longer a willing partner to the perpetuation of disgrace and misery. . .

Virtue and subjection, with this writer, seem to be synonymous terms. Did our grandmother at the spinning wheel occupy a higher position in the scale of being than Maria Mitchell, Professor of Astronomy at Vassar College? Did the farmer's wife at the washtub do a greater work for our country than the Widow Green, who invented the cotton-gin? Could Margaret Fuller, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frances E. Willard, Mary Lyon, Clara Barton have done a better work churning butter or weeding their onion beds on their respective farms than the grand work they did in literature, education and reform? Could Fannie Kemble, Ellen Tree, Charlotte Cushman or Ellen Terry (if we may mention English as well as American women) have contributed more to the pleasure of their day and generation had they spent their lives at the spinning-sheel? No! Progress is the law, and the higher development of woman is one of the important steps that have been achieved. . .

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON.
DECEMBER 1900

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The "Scum-woman" and the "Cow-woman," to quote the elegant phraseology of your contributor, are both of them less of a menace to humankind than the New Woman with her fierce vanity, her undigested knowledge, her over-weening estimate of her own value and her fatal want of all sense of the ridiculous.

When scum comes to the surface it renders a great service to the substance which it leaves behind it; when the cow yields pure nourishment to the young and the suffering, her place is blessed in the realm of nature; but when the New Woman splutters blistering wrath on mankind she is merely odious and baneful.

The error of the New Woman (as of many an old one) lies in speaking of women as the victims of men, and entirely ignoring the frequency with which men are the victims of women. In nine cases out of ten the first to corrupt the youth is the woman. In nine cases out of ten also she becomes corrupt herself because she likes it.

It is all very well to say that prostitutes were at the beginning of their career victims of seduction; but it is not probable and it is not provable. Love of drink and of finery, and a dislike to work, are the more likely motives and origin. It never seems to occur to the accusers of man that women are just as vicious and as lazy as he is in nine cases out of ten, and need no invitation from him to become so.

A worse prostitution than that of the streets, *i.e.*, that of loveless marriages of convenience, are brought about by women, not by men. In such unions the man always gives much more than he gains, and the woman in almost every instance is persuaded or driven into it by women—her mother, her sisters, her acquaintances. It is rarely that the father interferes to bring about such a marriage.

In even what is called a well-assorted marriage, the man is frequently sacrificed to the woman. As I wrote long ago, Andrea del Sarte's wife has many sisters. Correggio dying of the burden of the family, has many brothers. Men of genius are often dragged to earth by their wives. In our own day a famous statesman is made very ridiculous by his wife; frequently the female influences brought to bear on him render a man of great and original powers and disinterested character, a time-server, a conventionalist, a mere seeker of place. Woman may help man sometimes, but she certainly more often hinders him. Her self-esteem is immense and her self-knowledge very small. I view with dread for the future of the world the power which modern inventions place in the hands of woman. Hitherto her physical weakness has restrained her in a great measure from violent action; but a woman can make a bomb and throw it, can fling vitriol, and fire a repeating revolver as well as any man can. These are precisely the deadly, secret, easily handled modes of warfare and revenge, which will commend themselves to her ferocious feebleness.

Jules Ruchard has written:

> *J'ai professé de l'anatomie pendant des longues années, j'ai passé une bonne partie de ma vie dans les amphithéâtres, mais je n'en ai pas moins éprouvé un sentiment penible en trouvant dans toutes les maisons d'education des squilettes d'animaux et des mannequins anatomiques entre les mains des fillettes.**

I suppose this passage will be considered as an effort "to withhold knowledge from women," but it is one which is full of true wisdom and honorable feeling. When you have taken her into the physiological and chemical laboratories, when you have extinguished pity in her, and given weapons to her dormant cruelty which she can use in secret, you will be hoist with your own petard—your pupil will be your tyrant, and then she will meet with the ultimate fate of all tyrants.

In the pages of this REVIEW a physician has lamented the continually increasing unwillingness of women of the world to bear children, and the consequent increase of ill-health, whilst to avoid child-bearing is being continually preached to the working classes by those who call themselves their friends.

The elegant epithet of Cow-woman implies the contempt with which maternity is viewed by the New Woman who thinks it something fine to vote at vestries, and shout at meetings, and lay bare the spines of living animals, and haul the gasping salmon from the river pool, and hustle male students off the benches of amphitheatres.

Modesty is no doubt a thing of education or prejudice, a conventionality artificially stimulated; but it is an exquisite grace, and womanhood without it loses its most subtle charm. Nothing tends so to destroy modesty as the publicity and promiscuity of schools, of hotels, of railway trains and sea voyages. True modesty shrinks from the curious gaze of other women as from the coarser gaze of man.

Men, moreover, are in all except the very lowest classes more careful of their talk before young girls than women are. It is very rarely that a man does not respect real innocence; but women frequently do not. The jest, the allusion, the story which sullies her mind and awakes

* "I've taught anatomy for many years, I've spent a good part of my life in operating theatres, but I have nothing but the most painful reaction to finding, in all the halls of learning, animal skeletons and anatomical mannekins in the hands of young girls."

"Public life is already overcrowded, verbose, incompetent, fussy, and foolish enough without the addition of [the New Woman] in her sealskin coat with the dead hummingbird in her hair."

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"The error of the New Woman (as of many an old one) lies in speaking of women as the victims of men, and entirely ignoring the frequency with which men are the victims of women."

her inquisitiveness, will much oftener be spoken by women than men. It is not from her brothers, nor her brother's friends, but from her female companions that she will understand what the grosser laugh of those around her suggests. The biological and pathological curricula complete the loveless disflowering of her maiden soul.

Everything which tends to obliterate the contrast of the sexes, like your mixture of boys and girls in your American common schools, tends also to destroy the charm of intercourse, the savor and sweetness of life. Seclusion lends an infinite seduction to the girl, as the rude and bustling publicity of modern life robs woman of her grace. Packed like herrings in a railway carriage, sleeping in odious vicinity to strangers on a shelf, going days and nights without a bath, exchanging decency and privacy for publicity and observation, the women who travel, save those rich enough to still purchase seclusion, are forced to cast aside all refinement and delicacy.

It is said that travel enlarges the mind. There are many minds which can no more be enlarged, by any means whatever, than a nut or a stone. The fool remains a fool, though you carry him or her about over the whole surface of the globe, and it is certain that the promiscuous contact and incessant publicity of travel, which may not hurt the man, do injure the woman.

Neither men nor women of genius are, I repeat, any criterion for the rest of their sex; nay, they belong, as Plato placed them, to a third sex which is above the laws of the multitude. But even whilst they do so they are always the foremost to recognize that it is the difference, not the likeness, of sex which makes the charm of human life. Barry Cornwall wrote long ago:

As the man beholds the woman,
  As the woman sees the man;
Curiously they note each other,
  As each other only can.

Never can the man divest her
  Of that mystic charm of sex;
Ever must she, gazing on him,
  That same mystic charm annex.

That mystic charm will long endure despite the efforts to destroy it of orators in tight stays and balloon sleeves, who scream from platforms, and the beings so justly abhorred of Mrs. Lynn Lynton, who smoke in public carriages and from the waist upward are indistinguishable from the men they profess to despise.

But every word, whether written or spoken, which urges the woman to antagonism against the man, every word which is written or spoken to try and make of her a hybrid, self-contained, opponent of men, makes a rift in the lute to which the world looks for its sweetest music.

The New Woman reminds me of an agriculturist who, discarding a fine farm of his own, and leaving it to nettles, stones, thistles, and wire-worms, should spend his whole time in demanding neighboring fields which are not his. The New Woman will not even look at the extent of ground indisputably her own, which she leaves unweeded and untilled.

Not to speak of the entire guidance of childhood, which is certainly already chiefly in the hands of woman (and of which her use does not do her much honor), so long as she goes to see one of her own sex dancing in a lion's den, the lions being meanwhile terrorized by a male brute; so long as she wears dead birds as millinery and dead seals as coats; so long as she goes to races, steeplechases, coursing and pigeon matches; so long as she "walks with the guns"; so long as she goes to see an American lashing horses to death in idiotic contest with velocipedes; so long as she curtsies before princes and emperors who reward the winners of distance-rides; so long as she receives physiologists in her drawing-rooms, and trusts to them in her maladies; so long as she invades literature without culture and art without talent; so long as she orders her court-dress in a hurry; so long as she makes no attempt to interest herself in her servants, in her animals, in the poor slaves of her tradespeople; so long as she shows herself as she does at present without scruple at every brutal and debasing spectacle which is considered fashionable; so long as she understands nothing of the beauty of meditation, of solitude, of Nature; so long as she is utterly incapable of keeping her sons out of the shambles of modern sport, and lifting her daughters above the pestilent miasma of modern society—so long as she does not, can not, or will not either do, or cause to do, any of these things, she has no possible title or capacity to demand the place or the privilege of man. □

from Woman and Her Sphere (1902), *by the Duchess of Sutherland*

It is imperative that women should recognize this age as essentially one of preparation for the sex, rather than achievement. The natural powers of the average female mind are certainly equal, if not superior, to the average man's. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote his belief that there is something more substantive about a woman than ever there can be about a man. But so long a start have men obtained in freedom, and in consequent development, that opinion yields them a false superiority. Woman, like a butterfly emerging from the chrysalis, has wings at last, and latent strength to enable her to fly at will, but for a period she must wait for fuller growth. In this waiting, she comes to the possession of her own soul and finds, as Caryle puts it, "by study of herself the ground she stands on, what her combined inward and outward capability specially is."

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MARY SARGENT POTTER

A Plea for First-Class Women

1920

. . . There can be but one logical aim for the feminist movement—the development of the first-class woman, just as the ideal of the man should be the masculine prototype. The abnormal and wholly artificial spirit of sex antagonism which has been roused in many quarters will have no lasting influence. Men and women are going to stick together, and they are going to remain as different as they have been from the beginning of the world. This does not mean that there is a superior and an inferior sex. Women should get it out of their heads that they are inferior, and must prove their equality. They are not inferior, but they are different, a difference which it is of the utmost importance to maintain and to emphasize. Biologically, they are eternally different. Their bodies are different, their minds are different, their functions are different, their work should be of a different character. There can be but one ideal for the inevitable relationship. It should be a partnership—a first-class man and a first-class woman, working together but along different lines, for the common good. Few women can ever be made into semblances of first-class men, just as few men, thank God, have the capacity to simulate first-class women, or if they have, they become undesirable and of no importance. The need is for first-class women and the standard for them has scarcely yet been set. Now in so far as the suffrage and other forms of advancement develop in them qualities of complete womanhood, they are good and desirable. But in so far as they are ends in themselves, they have neither value nor importance.

The most vital task of the world, then, the training of the Spirit of the oncoming generation, is largely in the hands of women. Every inch of progress gained, in whatever direction, should be not for themselves, but in order that, through inheritance and environment, each generation shall become, by a wide margin, the finest which has yet appeared. Though permanent progress must necessarily be gradual, there is no reason why it should not be speeded up, or why each generation should be content with so small an advance—so small that it is sometimes mistaken for retrogression—over the one which has preceded it. This can be accomplished, not by an even more feverish activity, but by a more widely-spread attention to child-life.

There is the old argument that a small proportion of women only become mothers and homebuilders, that the responsibility rests on the few, and that even for them it is a vocation which occupies a comparatively short period of their lives. This is a narrow view. The advance of the sex with its resulting influence must very largely alter the entire race. In addition, numberless women can have a share in motherhood, its opportunities and responsibilities, though they themselves do not bear children. When Roosevelt said that a woman's love of country could best be shown by the bearing and the rearing of a large family, trained to the service of the community, he uttered a sound principle. It is not an easy task, nor always a safe one, and it entails inevitable suffering, endless sacrifice. So do all forms of patriotism. But in the world as it is today, it is no longer possible, however great the desire, for much of the finest stock of the country, the intellectuals and the professionals, to have families of even moderate size, or any at all. However great the personal and social desire, economic conditions have rendered it impossible. Who is to enable this fine, potential motherhood, these women of refinement and character, to feel they have a right to bear children, because the children's opportunities are safeguarded? If it is not done, the future will be controlled and destroyed by the products of haphazard and disastrous breeding in the slums. Inevitably it must lead to deterioration. This is a subject for advanced legislation in the form of grants, and one with which women should concern themselves. Then who is to see that the men and women to whom the education of the children is delegated are not so poorly paid that hope is very nearly precluded from their lives? Can men and women, themselves struggling against overwhelming odds, with no margin for physical needs, no channel through which nervous energy can be conserved, give to the training of mind and spirit those high qualities which such a task demands? Women should lead in the campaign to remedy the evil to a point far beyond the advance already won.

And the sick children of the world! With their pitiful lives unlived, what more glorious form of motherhood was ever given than that placed in the hands of the trained nurse? Who but herself, understanding the misery of physical distress, can teach little spirits that physical handicaps may become spiritual opportunities, that if they have been given sharp and difficult tools to work with, they can build with them more beautiful structures than ordinary lives, and that some of the finest of the world's work has been done by the world's invalids?

Today a woman's responsibility toward her individual children is often ended while she is still a young woman, yet she feels her social obligations as never before. She should realize that though one form of work is finished, her opportunities have increased, because she now has experience, judgment, knowledge. She recognizes her mistakes, she understands what principle led to her successes, she can speak with the authority of achievement. This great fund of trained, experienced motherhood should be released for the service of the oncoming generation throughout the world.

There is no end to the great work and destiny of woman, but her aim should be unmistakable and clear. Her vocation, her feminine qualities—not her feminine mid-Victorian weaknesses—should be guarded with jealousy and pride, and no advance deemed impossible in the interest of her cause, the development of that rare and beautiful thing—the First-Class Woman. □

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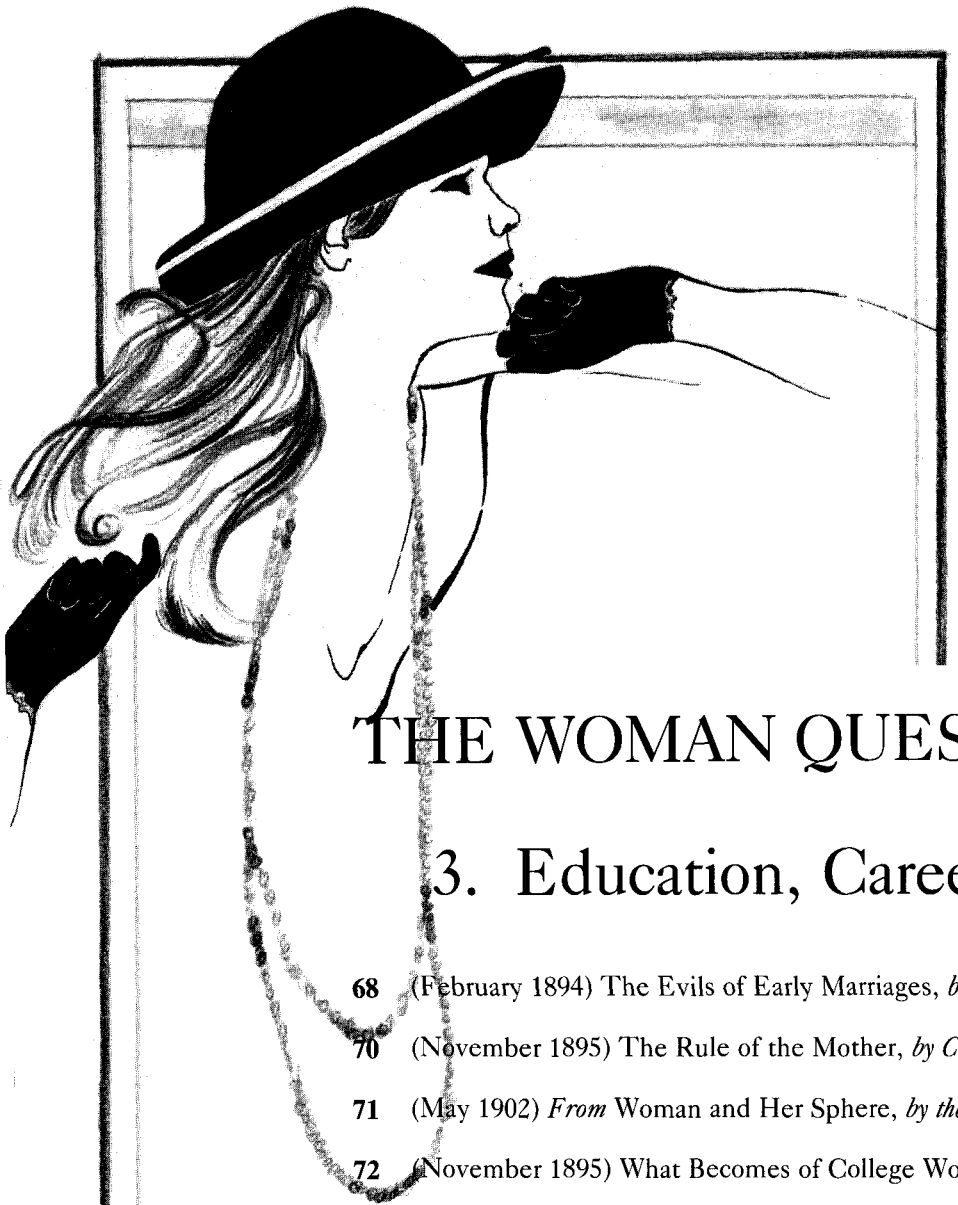

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CYRUS EDSON, M.D.

The Evils of Early Marriages

1894

The evil effect of early marriages, first on the mothers, and second on the offspring, is beginning to attract the attention of scientific men in many parts of the world. It is only within the last hundred years that people have understood the value of statistics, and have learned how to keep them. It was formerly believed that it was impossible to predicate, with any certainty, anything about men and women, because the impossibility of knowing beforehand what any individual would do was apparent. We have found, however, while this remains true of the individual, that a number of persons will act in precisely the same way, and that we can prophesy for the mass without fear of failure.

The value of statistics, though great in sociological matters, is yet greater in those which affect the health or life. While it is true that we cannot say of any one man when he will die, we can with perfect confidence say what proportion of a thousand men of the same age will have died ten years from now. More than this, we can declare almost absolutely what percentage of a thousand babies will have measles or croup. In the same way, we can tell beforehand what effect on those children certain known acts in the lives of the parents will have. Given men and women who have been exposed to certain influences on the health, as, for example, living in crowded tenement-houses, and we can say what will be the diseases which the children of those men and women will develop.

There are certain inherited abnormal tendencies, just as there are certain inherited diseases. By tendencies I mean conditions of mind and body, that manifest themselves in physical and mental deficiencies. These, as a rule, come from the mother's side. If the mother be not fully developed and her character not fully formed at the time of the birth of her child, the latter will in all probability never be capable of full development. It will be a weakling, morally and physically. It has long been a recognized fact, even among the people at large, that the children of older parents are wiser and better than those of youthful parents.

Child-bearing is one of the most severe drains on strength of which we have any knowledge; and for this, nature stores up in the mother a very great amount of reserve strength. Not only this, but the girl will, if she be in good health, accumulate much greater latent energy and strength than will her brother. It may be easily understood, however, that this accumulation is not made until after the girl has had her growth, because, up to that time, she must not only satisfy the daily need of strength, but she must also provide the material for growth. As the majority of girls cease to grow after they are seventeen, it is from this age on that this storing up of the reserve strength which will enable them to undergo the physical strain of motherhood takes place. Consequently, it is apparent that when a girl is married before the reserve has been gathered, she is called on to meet the physical strain without the necessary force. This can only result in one way, because the draught of the growing offspring on her strength will not be denied. Strength that is vital to her being is drawn on, and she is sacrificed in order that her child may be born.

The only career open to girls in European countries for many centuries has been marriage. The father has supported his daughters until they have become women, and has then expected them to marry into homes of their own. As a matter of course, since it is the function of the majority of women in this world to bear children, this demand then made that these girls should marry has had nothing unnatural about it; it has been the result of a natural law. But it brought with it the feeling that the girls must marry, no matter whether they wished to do so or not. It created for them one ideal—marriage; it logically attached a stigma to the title of "old maid," and, with

STATISTICS OF MARRIAGES IN NEW YORK CITY.

	1891.	1892.
Average age of grooms (years)	28.82	28.89
" " brides "	24.59	24.43
Number of grooms under 20 years of age	120	145
" brides " " "	2,839	2,958
Age at which there was greatest number of grooms (years)	25.29	25.29
" " " " next greatest number of grooms (years)	21.24	21.24
" " " " greatest number of brides (years)	21.24	21.24
" " " " next greatest number of brides (years)	25.29	25.29
Total number of marriages	15,764	16,001

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equal logic, made it, not exactly disgraceful, but certainly "bad form," for a girl to do anything to support herself. To further intensify the latter feeling, the pressure of overpopulation played its part. In homely words, there was not work enough for the boys and girls both, and the boys were believed to have the first claim on what there was. In return for this, they were expected to support the half that did not work for the daily bread. Of course, in their homes and in the care of their children, the women did their full share of the labor. But the fact remained that they were not allowed to work in any other way.

It is not a little amusing, although it is perfectly natural, to find that Mr. Walter Besant, in his articles on this country, has applied those laws or natural rules under which he has lived his life, to affairs as he sees them here. He laments the freedom of American girls to enter the field of labor and to compete with men, and he points out as what he believes will be the result, that the men will be debarred from working. It is probably not possible for Mr. Besant to understand that the natural resources of the United States has not yet seen one-tenth of their development, and that in this country there is work, therefore, for many times the population we have. In point of fact, it is the demand for labor, the demand for more hands and brains to do the work, that has opened all fields of industry in America to women. The enfranchisement of these women is due primarily to the need for more people to do the ever-increasing mass of work. It must not be forgotten that we have forces under our control to-day which enable us to wrest far more from the natural resources of the country and to utilize the raw material to an extent and in a way that the world has never seen before. While these forces have more than doubled the effectiveness of each human being, they have perhaps more than quadrupled the possible result to be derived from his efforts.

As a consequence, the women of this country, having been enfranchised and being to-day at liberty to support themselves, even as their brothers may, it is but natural that this freedom should reflect itself in the marriage statistics. An American girl need feel herself neither disgraced, nor a burden to others, if she elect not to marry; she has the right to labor and to earn her own living. She is therefore free to choose her line in life.

Now, it is a fact that nature is very conservative, and that she will guard a man or woman carefully. If there be no outside pressure of any kind, and if human beings are left to themselves, they will not undertake tasks which are too great for them. This is effected by what we call instinct, because it is rarely that persons acting under its dictates are able to give any reason for it. Generally speaking, they are incapable of analyzing the motives from which they act; they do not understand that the disinclination they have for a certain proposed course is really but the expression of an instinct given them by nature for their preservation. It is said the camel will not attempt to rise if the burden be too great; but so far as we know, there is no record of any camel having given any reasons for sleeping on the ground. Quite as dumb are those girls who refuse to marry because they prefer their liberty.

The pressure of American life on one and all of us is very great. There is a drive, a bustle, an ever-anxious effort to keep up with the procession, to get through the mass of work which is before us. The society in which we live is based on excitement; the tax it puts on our nerves and brains is of the greatest. Women feel this even more than men, and they show the effects in the constantly increasing amount of nervous diseases to be found among them. With men and women driven in this way, the children are born with a predisposition to nervousness. Under our system of educating them, this tendency is stimulated to the utmost.

We have, then, in this country as factors in the problem of early marriages, a problem which is taxing some of the wisest brains across the water: First, the overwork put on the girls during their years in school; second, the fact that they are free to marry or not, as they see fit. This latter follows on the two facts: that they are at liberty to support themselves, and that there is no stigma on them if they remain single. If we will place these two factors in conjunction with that instinct of self-preservation which nature implants in all of us, we should expect to find early marriages among American women not to be the rule.

The statistics on this point which I find available are worthy of special study:

The evil of early marriages in Europe, showing itself, as it does, in the health of the children, has engaged the attention of many scientific men. In a discussion before the London Diocesan Conference, it was declared as the unanimous opinion of that body that the evil of early marriages has grown to such an extent as to render some reform in the marriage laws urgently necessary. Subsequently, at the Congress of Hygiene, Dr. Korosi, of Buda-Pesth, read a paper on "The Influence of the Age of Parents on the Vitality of Their Children," containing remarkable statements in line with the above declaration. He showed, from a comparison of several thousand cases, that the proportion of deaths among children from weakly constitutions or maladies traceable to the mother was twice as large among the children of mothers under twenty as among the children of mothers over thirty. Investigation also showed that the healthiest offspring was born of mothers between twenty and thirty, united to husbands between thirty and forty; where either husband or wife was under twenty, the offspring proved generally weakly, this being the case, even in Hungary, where the girls become women at the age of thirteen. In that country, too, fifteen per cent. of the number of marriages showed the brides to be under twenty years of age, and in England twelve per cent.

It may be safely said that this evil does not exist in this country, at least to anything like the same extent among the American-born women. The reason is plain: we have removed the necessity which exists among foreign girls of marrying in order to be supported; and although the girls here are practically free to marry when they please, the instinct of self-preservation has guarded them well. They feel when very young they are not strong enough, and they instinctively or wisely wait until the time when they will be stronger. The remedy for the evil abroad would properly be to allow the girls to support themselves, to remove from them the reproach of not marrying, and then to trust to their instinct to guard the health of themselves and their offspring. Unfortunately, this remedy is one which time alone can bring to them. □

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C. P. SELDEN

The Rule of the Mother

1895

The record of primitive man, whose evil propensities still survive in the brutal and lawless elements of society, shows how humble have been our social beginnings and how slowly the more delicate and beautiful relations of family life have been evolved. It would be ungracious, however, from our comparative elevation, to look down with contempt upon the representatives of our more lowly estate, for the gorilla who is depicted as patiently sitting, armed with a club, at the foot of the tree in which mother gorilla nurses her young, was perhaps the first in the series leading to man who held himself responsible for the safety of the family, and who inspired respect for parental authority.

There was a time when what seems to us the most definite of all human ties was the most shifting and imperfectly defined. In the first instance it was believed among primitive men that the child belonged to the tribe in general, secondly, to the mother only; thirdly, to its father and not to its mother; and finally, that it was related to both. This last recognized truth is the basis of the family in modern society, but so far as the spiritual life of the child is concerned the man holds himself far less responsible than the woman for its maintenance or for the higher ideals connected with the home.

There are many reasons why this should be so. The natural forces at play in the organic world early conspired to subject women, by means of her sympathy for the child, to the reign of love and to the practice of the domestic virtues. On the other hand, the burden was thrown upon society, or perhaps more especially upon woman herself, of winning man by indirect means to this same theory of existence. It has been suggested that nature could not afford to leave the development of motherhood to chance. In the case of the father, however, her methods have been less insistent, and his evolution, in the highest sense of the word, has been a difficult and somewhat retarded task.

In addition to nature's carelessness, society also has neglected its opportunities for cultivating the theory of paternal responsibility. The Greeks and Romans, by whose ideas modern society has been so largely dominated, taught that a man's duty to the state was the first and most urgent claim. Cicero said that the love owed by a citizen to his country was holier and more profound than that due by him to his nearest kinsman. The Roman father, it is true, maintained absolute control in the family, holding even the power of life and death over his children, as seen in the condemnation of his sons to death by Brutus, who sentenced them without judicial forms, and not as a consul, but as a father.

In modern times the patriotic sentiment has become largely qualified by other considerations. It is now believed that the state is of importance in proportion to its power to guarantee the security and promote the well being of the family. This belief, however, has been only slowly attained, as well as many others essential to ethical progress. Even Plato struck at the root of paternal obligation in making the woman the property of the community rather than the faithful wife of one man. Furthermore, in the life of the Greeks, outside of the theoretic republic, we find that the legal guardian of the hearth was not well fitted to win a man to the higher motives of family life. Grote tells us that "owing to the almost Oriental seclusion, Greek wives, as a rule, were uncultivated, limited, dependent, and without charm." On the other hand, the freedom permitted the courtesan class was favorable to mental development as well as to the cultivation of social attractions; therefore these women became the companions the most sought after by men, and the ones who lent charm to life.

The modern ideal is to combine the integrity of the Greek wife with the varied attractions of the less restricted class. There can be no doubt that under these conditions there is a better outlook than ever before for the intelligent direction of the life of the child. There is, however, the risk that the new intellectual movement may cause women to forget that progress has not been due to the intellect alone. The emotions have played even a more important part than the intelligence in lifting mankind from the pit of animalism; and love and persuasion, rather than logic, must still be the principal agents in winning man from the "gladiatorial theory" of life, from his aberrant and centrifugal tendencies, to greater helpfulness in promoting the ideals of the home.

In America the tendency is to hold the mother responsible for the spiritual tone of the household. This unformulated theory has been pushed to so great an extreme that at length society is threatened with what has been designated a *matriarchate* or a return to that primitive state when the child was supposed to belong to the mother alone. Every teacher can bear testimony to the fact that the direction and oversight of the child's education are largely under the control of the mother. Even after the youth has entered college it is she who keeps in touch with his success or failure. Admirable as this interest may be, wife and child nevertheless suffer from the want of closer sympathy on the father's part in all that relates to the things of the spirit. Besides, however praiseworthy their intentions may be, mothers are not always the most judicious advisers. The father in many instances is an infinitely better guide; at any rate, his broad contacts with

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life and his natural force of character make him an ally that cannot safely be dispensed with.

All through the ages man has endeavored to dominate and impress his personality upon the world at large, until this form of activity has rendered irksome any more limited field of exertion. He has believed himself compelled to sing to the wide world so persistently and copiously, in such resonant praise-eliciting accents, that he has become fascinated, not only with the public deed, but with the oratorical utterances he finds so pleasing to the collective ear. As a result of these outside allurements it is difficult for him to subdue his voice to individual and immediate teaching. Furthermore, it is hard to persuade the politician and the philanthropist that the reforms needed in the state are first needed in the home, and that solicitude about other people's progress might in a measure be spared if men were primarily solicitous about those immediately dependent upon them.

The transference of paternal responsibility to institutions, and more especially to the mother, shows that there is a widespread conviction on the part of fathers, that, however it may be with other people's children, his own, at least, live by bread alone. Acting upon this belief he is generous beyond compare in supplying his family with physical luxuries. He is, however, far less lavish with his time and companionship. Indeed, he refuses to be bothered about such petty details as the formation of character, the discipline of the child, and the general conduct of the home. Even in the pursuit of his pleasures he often sets an example of independence which serves to strengthen in the average American household the proclivity shown by its members to fly off in a tangent. Like billiard balls they carom against each other, are *pocketed* in the home for a season, and then start off on independent careers. As a disintegrating force a certain amount of quarreling is insignificant compared with this cultivated indifference and the state of mind which finds expression in the "do as you like" theory of family life.

The decline of paternal authority is widespread, but nowhere has there been so great an abandonment of control as in America. In compensation there is, however, a growing belief that *"Le pouvoir paternal est plutôt un devoir qu'un pouvoir."* In recognition of this principle the cost and care of bringing up a child properly have become so great that there is an increasing sentiment in favor of small families, not only on the part of those who pride themselves upon their enlightened selfishness, but among conscientious people who realize the difficulties of bringing up a child in the way he should go. Save in agricultural communities, children seldom render any efficient service to their parents, and a young person adequately fitted for a profession, in most cases, has cost his parents and institutions of learning, not less than fifteen or twenty thousand dollars. This excessive tax upon the head of a household and upon the state suggests the possibility of mistaken zeal in inducing young people to abandon the field of manual labor.

The commercial theory of the division of labor is doubtless responsible for the withdrawal of the father from the concerns of the house; but this practice in the home as well as in the manufactory has been pushed to an extreme. It is an evil day in any civilization when other interests and duties are postponed to the making of money, and when wealth becomes the chief standard of success. Absorbed in the world of action, stimulated by its gains, and desirous of appearing successful in the eyes of his associates, it is easier for a man to pay bills and ask no questions, to give money rather than time or thought to the ways of the household.

Although there is much room for the improvement of the mother, she is, in a measure, constrained to the fulfillment of her duties. The means for evolving the perfected father are, however, more uncertain owing to the existing impediments to the operation of *selection*. The greater number of eligible wives among well-to-do people as compared with desirable husbands, so far reduces the range of choice that there is no guarantee that the noblest, strongest, or handsomest men will marry refined women. The difficulty here arises in part from the fact that men of this class, if poor, are apt to go into remote and uncultivated regions, and become the husbands of inferior women, while the rich often satisfy the claims of affection without incurring the obligations of the marriage tie. Thus the absence of healthy competition diminishes the chance of developing the best husbands and fathers.

Since the influence of woman for good does not appear to be in proportion to her numbers it is to be regretted that the birth rate does not show a greater proportion of males than is actually the case. The Jews, with whom there is a larger preponderance of males than any other race, are, according to Lecky, remarkable for their domestic virtues, and especially for the care of their children.

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from Woman and Her Sphere, *by the Duchess of Sutherland*

1902

There is an old story, the Japanese myth of creation, of how Izananni and Izanigi, the Adam and Eve of the Land of the Rising Sun, stood upon the floating bridge of heaven, the rainbow. Izananni brought up from the bottom of the sea, with his coral pointed spear, the material of which he formed the first dry land. Descending with his consort Izanigi, they set out right and left to make the tour of the island. They met, and the goddess, speaking first cried: "How delightful to encounter a beauteous male!" But at this Izananni took offence, for he thought it unbecoming that the female should speak first; so they made the circuit a second time, and when they met again Izananni said, before Izanigi could speak: "How pleasant, indeed, to meet a lovely woman!" Thus both were satisfied. Somewhat in the same infantile spirit, if not in the same civil manner, is the war between the extremes of both sexes conducted at the present day.

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CHARLES F. THWING, LL.D.

President
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What Becomes of College Women

1895

Mr. George William Curtis closed his memorable address at the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of Vassar College with these words: "We have left woman as a slave with Homer and Pericles. We have left her as a foolish goddess with Chivalry and Don Quixote. We have left her as a toy with Chesterfield and the club; and in the enlightened American daughter, wife, and mother, in the free American home, we find the fairest flower and the highest promise of American civilization."

The classic phrase of the orator is an expression of a simple fact. That fact is that about fifty-five per cent. of the woman-graduates of our colleges marry. The fact is a happy one—happy for the wives and husbands, and happy also for the homes. For most women prefer to marry. The fears early expressed that the college women would prefer a public to a domestic career, have proved to be false. Women have resigned exalted public places to become heads of simple American homes. The fact that most women prefer to marry is also a happy one for life itself. The home is the center of life; it is the source of life's best influences. No contribution for its enrichment is too costly. All that learning and culture can offer, all that the virtues can achieve, all that the graces can contribute, all that which the college represents and embodies, is none too rich for the betterment of the home. The college woman, therefore, as embodying the best type of womanhood, is bringing the best offering of herself to the worthiest shrine.

Twenty per cent. of all women who become of a marriageable age do not marry, and it is apparent that about forty per cent. of college women, who have become of a marriageable age, have not married. The question, therefore, is, what work are the unmarried women doing? Are they doing a work of value sufficient to justify the time and money spent in securing an education? Are they doing a work of the highest educational or ethical or civil value?

About 4,000 women are graduates of the principal colleges for women in the United States and among these principal colleges may be named Vassar, Wellesley, Smith, Bryn Mawr, Radcliffe, Barnard, and the College for Women of Western Reserve University. Besides these colleges there are many co-educational institutions. There are probably another 4,000 women graduates from reputable colleges which are open alike to women and to men. Of this great number of well-trained women it is probable that about 5,000 are at the heads of homes, or will finally find their career to be a domestic one. Of the remaining 3,000 it is to be said at once that they are found engaged in almost every employment.

The most popular, however, of all the fields of work for the college women is that represented in the schoolroom. It is probable that at least two-thirds of all college graduates teach for at least a short time after their graduation. Surely no work is more important than teaching in the public or private school, and no woman is better fitted to do the duties constituting this work than the well-bred and well-trained college woman. The American schoolroom needs good manners, good breeding, instruction beyond the text book and the lesson, and, more than all, it needs culture and sympathy in the teacher. These are needs which the college graduate is best fitted to fill. The public schools in every grade have this need, and it is a happy thing to be able to say that in hundreds and almost thousands of high schools throughout the country are found graduates of our colleges, not only doing the routine work which belongs to the teachers' profession but also contributing to this work the richness of culture and the breadth of sympathy which produce results far more precious than the ordinary routine of educational service. The college woman has not yet gone to a large degree into the schools of the grammar grade; but there are many reasons for believing that the grammar schools and the primary schools are soon to have the advantage of her presence and her work. It will be a happy time for American schools and American life, when every teacher's place is filled by a collegian. The normal school, in certain respects, gives an excellent training, but the best teacher is one who has first had the general training and the culture of the college to which is added the professional training of the best normal school.

It is to be said that women are found, though in less numbers, teaching in the colleges for women as well as in the high schools and other schools. To a slight extent they do teach men in colleges which are open to both men and women. Yet the time is not far distant when we may find women teaching in men's colleges. I was recently approached by one of the most distinguished scholars of the United States, herself a teacher in a conspicuous college for women, asking me in the most gracious way whether, if she accepted a position as teacher in the College for Women of Western Reserve University, she would be allowed to be a teacher in Adelbert College for men, which is a part of the same University? There are in the

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United States, according to the census of 1890, 735 women who are professors in colleges and universities. A large proportion of these women are to be found in colleges and universities which are hardly of a high collegiate grade, and not a few of them themselves are not graduates of any college, but among them are many eminent scholars, who teach branches as erudite as the highest mathematics and as advanced as the most refined philology.

Of the ten most conspicuous women who are graduates of Vassar College, and of the ten most conspicuous who come from Cornell University and from the University of Michigan, more than half are teachers in the colleges for women. They hold chairs of social science, of English, of botany, of chemistry, of Greek, of astronomy, of history, and of political science. They are giving to the cause of education, of culture, and of a higher civilization the same contribution which men in similar positions in the colleges for men are giving.

The last census of the United States shows that the number of women who are preachers is now 1,235, who are lawyers 208, and who are physicians and surgeons 4,555; but in these numbers are to be found only a few who are college women. A lamentably small proportion of the physicians of this country are college-bred. Out of the more than 4,000 women who are physicians it is probable that not more than 200 have had a college training. Out of the more than 1,800 women who are members of the Collegiate Alumnae Association are only 34 physicians. The law, the ministry and journalism command a far smaller proportion, for, in the same association of college women, there are only half a dozen lawyers, preachers and journalists.

As one reads over the names of the graduates of the colleges for women of the last twenty-five years he is impressed with the fact that only a few of these women have attained distinction, or have held conspicuous positions. One is reminded of the remark which Sydney Smith, writing in 1810, made, though not with absolute correctness, that up to that time no woman had produced a single notable work either of imagination or reason, in English, German, French or Italian literature. Three quarters of a century after Sydney Smith wrote, Mrs. Fawcett showed that there were at least forty women who had left a permanent mark in English literature alone; and yet, one can not fail to be impressed with the sad and glad fact that so few of college women have become famous. I have recently had an examination made of *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography* to discover the nature of the early training and also the character of the employment of the persons therein named. The work contains between fifteen thousand and sixteen thousand names, of which only 633 are names of women. Of these 633 women 320 are authors; seventy-three are singers or actresses; ninety-one are sculptors or painters; sixty-eight are educators; twenty-one may be called philanthropists; fourteen are missionaries; thirteen doctors; twenty-eight may be described as having their places in this article because of heroic deeds. There are also three who are described as engaging in business, one in nursing and one in following the profession of law. Of these 633 persons only nineteen have had a college training; of the 320 women who are named as authors, only nine are college women; of the ninety-one artists only one; of the actresses also one; of the educators seven; of the missionaries one only is college-bred. It is evident that the college woman has not become famous. This result is not strange, for the time since the college woman has been at all possible has not been long; and the time since the college woman has existed as an important part of American life has been very much shorter. Usually longer periods of time are necessary for doing that work of which the result is fame.

The effect of marriage upon the winning of distinction is not so great as first thought would lead one to believe, for of the six hundred and thirty-three women named in *Appleton's Cyclopaedia* one-half are married and one-half are unmarried. Some of the most distinguished women of the country have been married, and some women who have not been married have gained hardly greater distinction. Half of the women named in Appleton's work won fame through their books, and it is known that writing is one of those arts that can be carried on at home. The number of women who enter public employments is increasing, and these employments are usually inconsistent with the life of a wife and mother. We therefore shall find an increasing proportion of the distinguished women, who are college graduates, unmarried.

I have recently made two lists, one of the distinguished women who are not graduates and one of distinguished women who are graduates. The two lists manifest a striking difference in that nearly all the distinguished women who are not graduates are distinguished for their writings, and they belong to the older order of women. In the list of graduates I notice that the more distinguished women are distinguished for their work as teachers or scientific investigators. They do, at any rate, represent services to the cause of scholarship of the highest value. They are to be found, these women, as presidents of colleges, at the head of great philanthropic movements, as teachers of history, literature, philology; mathematics, Greek and chemistry. There are names that suggest erudite thinking in the mathematics and in abstruse scientific investigation, and also in the application of scientific investigation to the problems of practical house-keeping. They and their work represent the high water-mark of our civilization.

But one induction of a nature somewhat startling is made evident. It is that from the great field of literature the college woman has been absent as a creator for the last twenty years. The number of books, of every sort, written by college women is very few. No college woman has yet arisen whose work is to be put into the same class with the works of Miss Wilkins, Miss Murfree, or of Miss Phelps, or of several others whose greatest works have appeared in the time since the first college was opened to women. The American college has given us great scholars, great philanthropists, great administrators, great teachers. It has given us Frances E. Willard and Lucy Stone. It has not given us great writers. It has given us no great novelist. It has given one or two, and only one or two, essayists, and, without doubt, the most conspicuous is Miss Vida Scudder.

It is possible that one may say that the American college for men has not given us great writers. The remark

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is partially true and partially false. Of the great historians, all, with one exception, are graduates. Of that generation of poets who have helped to render American literature illustrious, all, with the exception of Whittier, are graduates. Some of the greatest essayists are not indeed included in the list, but Emerson is there. Of our novelists, a part, and a part only, are graduates. One does not forget that Howells is not a graduate, neither is Aldrich, but one does not fail to remember that Hawthorne was trained at the college of Longfellow.

But all exceptions aside, it is certainly true that the graduates of the colleges for women have not made that contribution to literature that they have made to scholarship, or to teaching, or to administration. To consider the cause of this condition would carry us too far afield for the present discussion.

It would be somewhat bold in anyone to say who are the most distinguished women of any college; but one who knows the University of Michigan intimately and has known it for years, and another who has had a hardly less intimate acquaintance with Cornell University, sent to me the names of ten whom they regard as the most conspicuous in the history of these two great colleges. In the Michigan University they are as follows:

Dr. E. J. Mosher, Class of 1875, now an eminent practitioner in Brooklyn, N. Y., who was professor in Vassar College, and for some time had charge of the Massachusetts Prison for Women at South Framingham.

Dr. L. A. Howard King, '76, Tientsin, China. Miss Howard became eminent as a missionary physician by her successful treatment of the wife of the great Viceroy, Li Hung Chang. He became so interested in her work, that, with the aid of some of his mandarins, he erected a hospital and equipped it for her use. She afterwards married an English missionary named King. She did more to introduce Western medicine and surgery into China than almost any other person.

Dr. Lucy Hall Brown, a practitioner in Brooklyn, New York, and also for some years a Professor in Vassar College. She graduated in 1878.

Mary Sheldon Barnes, '74, wife of Professor Barnes, of Leland Stanford University. She was for some time Professor of History in Wellesley College. She has written historical text books.

Angie C. Chapin, '75, Professor of Greek in Wellesley College.

Alice Freeman Palmer, the distinguished ex-President of Wellesley College. Graduated in the class of '76.

Lucy M. Salmon, '76, the head of the Department of History in Vassar College.

Mary E. Byrd, '78, Professor of Astronomy, Smith College.

Katherine E. Coman, '80, Professor of History and Political Economy in Wellesley College.

From Cornell graduated the following women:

Mrs. Julia Irvine, President of Wellesley College.

Martha Carey Thomas, who holds the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Zurich, and is now President of Bryn Mawr College.

Ruth Putnam, author of "William the Silent Prince of Orange, the Moderate Man of the XVI. Century."

Mrs. Susanna Phelps Gage, scientist and illustrator.

Mrs. A. W. Smith, in 1895 Assistant Professor of Social Science in Leland Stanford University.

Emily L. Gregory, Ph. D. (Zurich), Professor of Botany, in Barnard College.

Mrs. Florence Kelley Wischnewetzky, now Chief Inspector of Factories for the State of Illinois, and well-known as an author upon social problems.

Mrs. Anna Botsford Comstock, entomologist and wood engraver.

Kate May Edwards, Ph. D., Associate Professor of Greek at Wellesley College.

Eliza Ritchie, Ph. D., Instructor in Philosophy at Wellesley College.

Mrs. Mila Tupper Maynard, formerly pastor of churches at La Porte, Ind., and at Grand Rapids, Mich.

Among the most famous graduates of Vassar College, one cannot fail to make mention of Mrs. Ellen H. Richards, connected with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who has for twenty years been an eminent student and teacher in applied chemistry; of Christine Ladd Franklin, mathematician and logician; of Mary A. Jordan, Professor in Smith College, and whose services have been a great power in the building up of that popular college; of Heloise E. Hersey, formerly professor in Smith College, and now at the head of a successful school for girls in Boston; of Mary Whitney, worthy successor to Maria Mitchell at Vassar; of Frances Fisher Wood, a physician in New York; and of Mrs. Elizabeth W. Champney, the author of several popular books.

The record of the graduates of the Bryn Mawr College is one less distinguished than these names just suggested make, for the college was founded in 1885, and no graduate is of a standing longer than six years. But the following facts are most promising of useful and distinguished careers:

Number of A. B.'s to 1895	145
Have taken degree of Ph. D	2
Have taken degree of A. M.	10
Engaged in graduate study	43
Dean of College	1
Lecturers, demonstrators, etc. in colleges	11
Private tutors and school teachers	35
Secretaries	6
Librarians	1
Literary workers	1
Philanthropic workers	3
Married	15
Doing no special work	52
Dead	2

Surely such a record as is herein suggested is tremendously significant. Whether it is better, or not so good a record as men would have permitted the historian to make it is not necessary to say, but this record does represent work which is absolutely worth doing. The result is one of absolute satisfaction to the friend of the cause of college education for women. The American college has helped American women to get strength without becoming priggish, vigor of heart without being cold; it has helped them to become rich in knowledge without being pedantic, broad in sympathy without wanting a public career, and large-minded and broad-minded without neglecting humble duties. The American college has helped women toward doing the highest work, by the wisest methods, with the richest results. □

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ELIZABETH BANKS

The Educated American Drudge

1904

Toy!" "Beautiful Tyrant!" "Queen—with Man her willing slave!" It is by such names that the American woman is known abroad, especially in England.

The American man, engrossed in business, turned into a mere money-grubber for the benefit of his womankind, while she shines in society, travels in Europe and pursues the Cult of Culture—this is the picture of American life most frequently presented to the English people. They judge by what they see abroad, by the average travelling specimens. They have no other means of judging, since comparatively few English people come to the United States. When compared with these few English who come to America, the number of American women travelling abroad seems very large indeed. Yet, if these latter are compared with those American women who remain always in their own country, the number of the travellers is infinitesimally small.

While the American Toy, the American Tyrant and the American Queen sip ice-cream sodas through a straw in the Cecil courtyards, and make the welkins of the American Quick Lunch Restaurant in the Strand ring with their shrill orders for terrapin and soft-shell crabs, the American Drudge stays at home and keeps her house, and *she* is far more typically American. But the English people do not know her. As I have said, they judge by what they see abroad, not by a close study of American life in this American land, and they think the picture a realistic one, and so they talk and write of the American Type.

Having, during the past eleven years, resided in England, and having become, to a certain extent, English in my point of view of many matters, I have found myself, from time to time, thinking of my countrywomen as I have discovered them abroad, not as I left them at home in what seemed to me the very long ago.

I am of the Middle West; and, to be sure, once in a while there seemed to come to me a faint recollection of the sound of the scrubbing-brush, the rattle of the dish-pan, the swishing of brooms and dusters. They seemed to be in connection not with "the very poor," nor yet with the Western "hired girl," but with my old friends of earlier associations. There were visions of tired, worn faces, bent backs. The visions grieved and pained me; yet, being but faint ones, they did not affect me deeply, nor abide with me long. Sometimes I thought of our country parson's wife, who did all her housework, including the ironing of the parson's white neck-ties; took care of her three children; led the young people's meeting; presided every Sunday at the church organ; taught a Sunday-school class; looked after the sewing-circle; gave her children lessons in drawing and music; made her own and her children's clothes; and, from out of the multiplicity of all her other duties as housekeeper, mother and parson's wife, snatched a few minutes' time every day in which to keep up her German by reading a bit of Goethe or Schiller.

I was talking about her one day to an English clergyman, the editor of a prominent magazine, and he exclaimed:

"How very extraordinary! And may I ask if she was what in England we should call a 'gentlewoman'?"

"Oh yes," I answered. "She was the daughter of a lawyer. She was a graduate of Oberlin, and a woman whose surroundings were always of the most refined and intellectual."

"Dear, dear!" exclaimed he. "What a character for a study and a story! But in England nobody would believe her to be taken from life. We have poor clergymen here, very poor ones; but they always manage to keep a servant and a nurse. It is very pathetic, very pathetic!"

I, too, thought it "very pathetic," also "very extraordinary." I made myself believe that our parson's wife was different from all other parsons' wives. That the woman was average, or typical, I certainly should have denied.

And one day, a few months later, I received a letter from an old college mate, who, since I had seen her, had married, moved to a large Western town, and had three children. Apologizing for not having answered my letter long before, she said:

"My dear, you must not expect me to write to you often, for I am a busy Martha, as you would understand if you were not a literary bachelor woman. Of course, I keep up with my Latin, and I am refreshing my mind in regard to Botany, for my little girl is interested in it. But my time is quite full, what with the housework, the baking and mending, the making of all our clothes, and then I have my church and club and charity work. But I have a good washerwoman, so that I have only the ironing to do now."

An English friend was calling on me when I received the letter; and, feeling somewhat proud of what to me seemed the wonderful accomplishments of my old schoolmate, I read this part of the letter aloud to him.

"A college woman, did you say?" he said, looking bewildered.

"Yes," I answered, "one of the most brilliant minds I have ever known."

"I suppose she made an unfortunate marriage; perhaps she did not marry a gentleman; or perhaps they have become very poor? In that case, it is very remarkable, yet very fortunate, that she is thus able to help him on his feet again."

I explained that the girl had married a "gentleman," and that he belonged to what in England is known as the

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from "Style" in Women's Clothes
(1918)
by Richard Berry

It is hopeless for American designers to attempt an advance along the vicious path which has already been traveled to its final ingenious refinement by the more deft French designers. We have had this season a sample of what our native designer does in the silhouette, advertised as the "American fashion." This tight skirt, bustle effect, an ultra adaptation of post-Civil War style, did not "catch on," despite the efforts of models, showgirls and pseudo "smart" women.

The time has come to establish a style of our own and to make that style permanent. And when style ceases to be "style" it becomes costume. We are accustomed to patronize other national costumes, vaunting our superiority in changing "style." Whoso does that is ignorant of the fact that a costume is the last expression of a civilization, and that it comes after "styles" are outworn and discarded as ugly, barbarous and inefficient.

The American costume must be in keeping with American ideals. It must express the national character. It must be both simple and beautiful. It must be capable of reproduction in the cheapest fabrics without losing the grace of its lines, and yet it must be able to lend itself to subtle adornment and elaboration for the pleasure of the wealthy and the artistic. Above all, it must be something so adroitly adapted to the manners of the people that it can be maintained long enough to be perfected. The fiat of a government might institute it, but time alone can establish it.

If all this required any revolutionary change it might be folly even to contemplate the step, for in nothing is the human being so conservative as in clothes. It is fortunate, doubly fortunate, that the present styles approximate the ideal which might easily, with the proper authoritative definition, become the national costume. Therefore, we do not need reform; we need only standardization. If we can contemplate seriously national prohibition from alcohol surely we can acclaim national prohibition from the degrading, debilitating, incessant changes of style.

"professional class." Also, that they had not become "very poor"—quite the contrary. They were improving in their circumstances every year. Had she not said that *now* she had a washerwoman, implying that she had not always had one?

"You mean that a college woman began that sort of thing as soon as she was married—that she married expecting to do it?" he exclaimed. When I replied that I thought that was the case, his reply was:

"Of course, it is out of the ordinary, else it would do away with one's preconceived notions of the American man's treatment of his wife. But I assure you that it would be impossible to find in England a gentleman who would allow his wife to become a household drudge!"

I agreed with the Englishman that it was "out of the ordinary." I believed that I had an exceptional college friend, as well as having had an exceptional parson's wife; and then I returned to my native land, and, travelling in the Middle West and the Far West, I have had my mind disabused. The cases were not unique. I have found them very common, so common that I would almost call them typical of a large majority of educated American married women in certain sections of the United States. Asked how these women have impressed me on my return to my own country, after more than a decade of wandering, I should unhesitatingly say: "They are household drudges."

Were I a painter, and did I wish to depict on canvas the typical American Wife, I should put a calico dress upon her, tie a gingham apron round her waist, and paint her with an intellectual face, all eager, searching—searching for dust.

"Being so British, you will like to see these," said a college woman to me a month or two ago when I was calling on her. She opened a parcel of a half-dozen Irish linen housemaids' aprons, with huge pockets and strapped bibs. "They are from Belfast. A friend brought them to me."

"What are they for?" I asked.

"For afternoons," she answered. "In the morning I wear the gingham ones, but there is always something to do."

Always something to do! It is well for every woman that she should have always something to do, but the something should not always require an apron.

Throughout the West, I met the Educated American Drudge in her hundreds. At times she seemed, in part, to realize what she was. At other times she seemed to live and work all unconscious of the depth of drudgery to which she had descended, especially if her husband helped her to beat the carpets, and hung up the clothesline on a Monday morning before he went to business. For the Drudge's husband is "handy about the house."

The Educated Drudge does not have a large family. Her limit is three children. The average is two; indeed, statistics will probably show it to be but one and a half. It was at her, at least in part, that President Roosevelt levelled his accusation of contributing to Race Suicide, and thereby helping on the Survival of the Unfit.

It is true that the Educated Drudge has not done all that Nature, perhaps, intended and fitted her to do, in the way of increasing and multiplying after her kind and replenishing that part of the earth which she inhabits.

It is also true that in no country in the world, except the United States, will one find a woman in checked gingham apron presiding at the wash-tub and stopping, between rubs, to go into the parlor to help her only little daughter over a difficult part of Schubert or Wagner at the piano! In no other country will one find a wife washing dishes, cooking, sweeping, dusting, scrubbing, putting patch upon patch and darn upon darn for ten hours during the day, then spending her evenings helping her two children with their lessons in Geometry and Physics.

And in no other country, except among the peasantry, will one find the mother of a three weeks' old infant doing her own housework and taking care of her child besides!

Of real rest, the woman has none. If she snatches an

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from What Men Think of Woman's Dress (1895)
by C.H. Crandall

. . . The increase of liberty that women enjoy in this latter decade or two, their entrance into the realm of men's occupations, and their consequent desire for greater freedom in dress, make it a hard matter, under these scarcely-adjusted conditions, to draw the line between masculine likes and dislikes as to dress reform. It may be stated emphatically, however, that almost all men abominate all forms of woman's attire that merely aim to be "mannish," that are adopted only for the sake of making a "smart" appearance. Mannish collars, vests, hats, neckties, etc., when worn by women, almost always create a revulsion of feeling in a man by impairing that femininity in appearance which must always be one of the greatest charms of womanhood.

At the same time men would gladly encourage women in their natural right to adopt such modifications as would give them greater freedom for exercise or business pursuits, and consequently greater health. There was great fear among the timid that the adoption of the modern bicycling costumes would subject the wearer to vulgar comment, or at least insufferable stares, from men. The fact is that women stare at and criticise their progressive sisters more than men do.

Men do not object in the least to their wives, or sisters, or daughters, wearing "gym" suits for athletics, divided skirts or Turkish trousers for bicycling, or even for business, so long as the touch of femininity, of modesty, is never lost in the making of such costumes. The man does not concern himself with details about such garments, but he looks for that roundness, as opposed to angularity; that grace, be it of a fluffy wing, or a ruffle, or gather; that little adornment, a touch of color, ribbon, flowing outline, that shall proclaim at once the sweetness and preciousness of womanhood.

It should be a recognized principle that beauty of figure is not to be hidden or lost by means of dress. There is no need to distort the art of the Creator by the art of the milliner. If a woman has a beautiful throat, she has a perfect right to reveal it, except when she runs a risk of taking cold. Almost every woman has some good feature. Let her make the most of it. Be it beauty of eyes or hair, or complexion, beauty of stature, of strength, of arm or limb, dress should enhance it.

hour off from housework to don the pretty gown she has made for herself, and go to her club to listen to a paper on "The Duties of a Wife" or "Model Motherhood," the rush to get there and the rush to get back, "in time to have dinner on the table," adds to her weariness. If, instead of going out, she lies down in her bedroom for an afternoon nap, she hears piercing little cries of "Ma, where's my pants—the striped ones?" "Oh, mamma, help me to trim my dollie's hat!"

Drudge in the kitchen, she is also slave to her children, and up to the time which would seem to an English person a very mature age indeed, they occupy cots at night in the family bedroom, so that she may "keep the covers on them" and be sure that "nothing happens."

At first one is filled with pity, and then one is lost in admiration of the Educated American Drudge. In spite of the odds against her, she has so far held her own. That she has not degenerated is the wonder of the age. That part of the country which has produced women capable of taking their hands from the washboard to guide their children's fingers over the piano keys or add a finishing touch to a bit of charcoal-drawing, will surely one day produce something very magnificent, or something very terrible, in the way of a Woman.

A multiplicity of causes has contributed to the production of the present type, chief among which has been, during the past quarter of a century, the over-education of the Western women and the under-education of the men, which has brought about a large amount of mismating. Praise as we may the American system of "giving the first chance to the girls" and letting the boys, if need be, saw wood, we must admit, if we are honest, that it has its disadvantages. It produces what, for want of a better term, we may call "two-thousand-dollar women," who, if they marry at all, must content themselves with marrying "one-thousand-dollar men," with the net result of household drudgery for the women. Let the thousand-dollar man be as "handy" as he may, and kind, as he usually is, he remains unobservant and obtuse. His obtuseness in the first place prevents his seeing the incongruity of the match he asks the woman to make; and, in the years that follow, he fails to observe the fact that she *is* a drudge; he fails to note that at thirty-five she looks forty-five, and at forty-five she is worn out and broken down.

And there seems to be in the American woman herself a natural tendency, a willingness—one might almost say anxiety—to be a drudge. Give her a servant, or two servants, and she remains Drudge-in-Chief. There is about her a certain primitiveness, a harking back to Puritan ancestors, that makes it difficult for her to learn that even a married woman may, under certain circumstances, have some higher duties than the "seeing to" her husband's dinner and the suckling of her child. Take her out of college and put her in a home, and it is difficult to convince her that the concentration of all her energies upon the elimination of a speck of dust is a bit of foolishness.

Given the same circumstances, the same surroundings and the same *apparent* necessity that have contributed to the making of the household drudge, as I have found her in the West, and I believe there is but one part of the United States where the Drudge would not become the real American Type, and that is in the South.

Outside the Southern States, the typical American woman is too solicitous a housewife, too anxious a housekeeper, altogether too much of a Martha, too contented a drudge. How she shall be freed is a question. Perhaps with the solution of the Domestic Service Problem, if it ever comes, will come her deliverance from drudgery. □

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MRS. RUSSELL SAGE

Opportunities and Responsibilities of Leisured Women.

1905

There is an immense amount of feminine talent and energy wasted in the world every day. This is not due to the indifference or the laziness of woman, for she is eager to do, to accomplish, to go out into the field of life and achieve for herself and for her kind. But she simply does not know how. One of the most important movements of the day, therefore, is the reawakening of woman, the building her up on a new basis of self-help and work for others. That movement will set loose an amount of energy and talent that will revolutionize our social life. In a recent article, entitled "A Plan for Girls with Nothing to Do," Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons says:

> "Strange to say, there is a large class of persons, exclusive of paupers and criminals, who, during a certain period of their lives at least, seem to be purposely shut out from opportunities for systematic activity of almost every kind. I refer to the large, and I think growing, class of young women who do not marry for a period of from five to ten years after they leave school or college. I refer also, of course, only to those members of the class who are not engaged in wage-earning occupations, or in systematic, although, as a survival of an earlier family systems, unpaid domestic labor."

What I have to say concerns all our idle rich women, and does not apply in any way to women whose domestic requirements are so great as to preclude them from activity in other fields. Among the idle rich of to-day are many women whose families have grown up, so that they are largely relieved of household responsibility and occupation. Such women have much time, money and executive ability; but they do not know how to apply them. They only await suggestion, or, better still, good leadership, to devote their powers to effective work. These women, finding their domestic occupation gone, drift quite naturally into club life; and clubs made up of this class are, as a rule, of a useful and beneficent nature.

The question broadly is, Is woman's sphere of usefulness becoming enlarged? Now, while it may not be expanding, still it is adjusting itself more effectively to her various talents. There is no doubt that woman's highest duty is the home, that her influence there is more powerful for the lasting good of mankind than anywhere else. But many women of high intelligence who are not married, or whose children have gone abroad into the world, carrying there the influence of their mothers' training to sweeten and strengthen their own homes, are bound by every law of morality to find a beneficent outlet for their powers. It is absurd to suggest that women who have a talent for music or literature or art should be enslaved by domestic drudgery, while the struggle for the civilization of the world is going on. As a matter of fact, many women with actual genius for household economy are contributing their influence through the press to the building up of artistic and hygienic homes, and thereby elevating the taste and promoting the health of the community. Would the influence of these women be so great if they were obscure in some remote village? A great percentage of the successful writers of the day are women, and their talent is more subtle and no less powerful than that of men. The theory that women are cowardly and capricious is a delusive outgrowth of the egotism of men. It does not require the citing of cases like that of Joan of Arc to refute such an absurd idea. The old saying that peace has its heroes as well as war is exemplified, I believe, almost exclusively in women. I verily believe that if one were to question indiscriminately a thousand men as to where they got their character, almost all of them would say: "My courage and stability came from my mother, my intelligence from my father."

I am not at all concerned with the question whether women are qualified to enter the fields of labor that have been so long preempted by men. Many of our grandest women are doing the work of men in the environment of women. As a matter of fact, the limitations of woman's field of endeavor are almost wholly physical. I refer of course to the ordinary American woman, because in Europe even physical limitations seem to have been obliterated. I have never been shocked and disgusted at the sight of a woman in this country yoked with a cow to a plough, a sight which, I am told, is common enough in the fields on the continent of Europe. Nor is the American woman available as a trunk-carrier, like her sister of Holland. Our Puritan mothers—no more than our gentle mothers of the South—had no idea of producing a race of purely physical creatures. Every woman of good American family is born with an inherent dignity of sex which nothing can take from her.

The question, then, is not what our women can do, but what they must do. With all the privileges and blessings that are their heritage go commensurate responsibilities. The moral law is just as exacting as the natural law. God had a purpose in planting high-toned and good women in American soil, both North and South. The women of the two sections are as different from each other as day and night, but each is a splendid type in itself. God meant America to be a nation of brains, or He would not have made it a free nation. He demands that those brains shall be used to cultivate themselves and the brains of others. Now the woman of to-day has demonstrated the quality of her talent, courage and endurance. Therefore there is no excuse for her not working. True, she is still far behind man in the matter of executive ability where great enterprises are involved, or as an organizer, but she is

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overtaking him with rapid strides. Just now, in civic affairs, her courage is perhaps a little in advance of her judgment. Her methods may not be so sophisticated, nor possibly so judicious, as those of her brother; but one is safe in saying that her purposes are infinitely more idealistic than his, and her attitude decidedly less compromising. A man may trade municipal for Presidential votes, thus sacrificing his city for the nation, his domestic welfare for the policy of the party in power. But who ever heard of a member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union who would in the slightest degree relax her attitude on the temperance question? I am not referring now to the women who form so-called "patriotic" clubs for the sole purpose of social life and without the slightest sense of the true import of the word "patriotism." The women of the land must learn that there is more real joy in work than in idleness; that eternal happiness is reached through work and sacrifice; that the temporary, butterfly pleasure is the *ignis fatuus* that lures through the beauty of youth and the strength and wisdom of mature womanhood into the slough of discontented old age.

The Lord bestowed upon American womanhood virtue, beauty, strength, and, in many cases, wealth and time. He expects what? First that the seed of virtue shall be disseminated throughout the race. Beauty is the manifestation of a pure heart and must be retained unsullied, that others may emulate it through purity of heart. It inspires as nothing else can. From strength, the Lord demands effort in the direction of civilization.

God has put woman with these tools into His vineyard and commanded her to work.

In the first place, she must kill the weeds and prepare the soil. Among the weeds to be found in this particular vineyard, the hardiest and most tenacious is selfishness, the result of teaching our leisure girls that they not only need not do for others, but not even for themselves. When a woman has nothing to do but receive the attentions and flatteries of others, she becomes selfish in the same proportion that another woman who works and sacrifices herself for others becomes unselfish. She becomes narrower, less mental, less moral, less idealistic, less useful, and more discontented in the same proportion that the other expands and develops towards higher character. Both of these processes are in obedience to the same law, the operation of which is quite obvious. The tragedy of it all is that the selfish woman is unconscious of her retrogression. She is hypnotized into depraved tastes by the example of those whom she has been taught to regard as paragons of good social form, which should have its basis in morality. There is great danger there for the young girl. The steps by which she may descend are short and the incline gradual. There are no sharp breaks to shock her into a realization of where she is going.

The importance of example to the young cannot be overestimated. The home atmosphere must be pure, if you would have pure children. While the act is but the manifestation of a mental condition, conversely there is grave and undoubted danger that it may by suggestion produce the same mental condition in others. The home atmosphere has been responsible for the continued integrity of the republic of the United States of America. While our great men have not come, as a rule, from the more aristocratic and exclusive circles, neither have they come from the slums. It is from an atmosphere untainted with the licentiousness of the one extreme or the moral filth of the other that the enduring virtue of American manhood and womanhood has sprung. As the perfect flower requires shade no less than sunshine, so perfect womanhood requires work no less than the brilliancy of social life for its perfect development. All sun or all cellar produces no perfect flower. There is an old and astoundingly fallacious theory that, to make a boy temperate, one should acquaint him with the taste and use of wine at the home table. I have never known this idea to be carried out without disastrous results. One might as well try to make a boy honest by putting him into a school of pickpockets.

When I was young, the idea of a girl smoking a cigarette or drinking a glass of wine was preposterous. Even men were not in the habit of smoking in the society of reputable women. Not long ago, I attended a dinner where there were as many women diners as there were men. Just before speech-making began, it was put to a vote whether or not smoking should be indulged in during that part of the dinner. The ladies present, not wishing to be obnoxious, voted "Yes," I being the only one that voted "No." The result was that the men indulged their love for tobacco to the discomfort of almost all the women present and the nausea of some of them. This sort of thing is remotely responsible for the cigarette-smoking habit among reputable young women. They indulge in order to affiliate with young men and be considered "good fellows."

Drinking is indulged in to an appalling extent by women of the wealthy idle class, and their daughters are following in their footsteps. The great danger of this is that the idle rich class influences the succeeding strata of society. This class is surrounded with a certain glamour that those not so high up in the so-called "social scale" mistake for something genuine, but which is the veriest sham. Bear in mind that I refer to no set or clique, but to a condition manifested in all parts of the country. Now, the persons of this class are widely imitated. If they drink it is

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"The idle rich are no more vicious than the idle poor, but they are much more lacking in sympathy with one another."

considered smart to do so, and others follow suit. If they smoke cigarettes, other girls do the same.

Gambling is one of the inevitable concomitants of idle, extravagant life. Not only is this due to the fascination of the game, but too often to the necessity of winning money to support such an existence. Here are some instances: A gentleman I know was invited to dine at a fashionable country house. After dinner, he was about to leave for town, when the hostess invited him to a game of Poker. He declined at first, but on her insistence finally acquiesced. Chips were handed about in stacks to the players, and the game proceeded. Finally, the gentleman referred to found it imperative to retire from the game, in order to catch the last train. The hostess followed him into the hall, and quietly informed him that he owed her for the chips with which she as banker had supplied him, and which he had lost in the game. He protested that he had had no idea that they were playing for actual money. The hostess rejoined that that was out of the question, as it was always understood that chips meant money. "I'll give you my check now, or send you the money to-morrow from town," said the gentleman. "No," said the hostess, "you must pay up before you leave this house"; and, rather than make a scene, he called one of the gentlemen aside and borrowed the money to make good his losses.

The trouble is that the wives of many men in this class squander in gambling and other forms of dissipation the money their husbands give them for household expenses, and are compelled to resort to just such measures to make up the deficit, lest their husbands find out the true state of affairs and adopt drastic measures to correct them. Here is an instance of the meretritious extremes to which some persons resort to recoup their losses: A charming young girl whom I know was induced frequently by two young ladies to play Bridge Whist. She did not realize that she was gambling, until she was told by the mother of the young ladies that she was in debt to the extent of $600. "Why," she cried, "what can I do? My people would be outraged if they knew I'd been gambling!" "That doesn't matter," was the reply; "it is a debt of honor and must be paid—somehow."

An old friend of mine who regularly visits Palm Beach said that the gambling habit obtains among the young lady visitors there to a scandalous extent. She was astounded, she said, at the way in which they would come into the rooms specially fitted up and set apart for the purpose, and, taking off their gloves, settle themselves at the tables for long and serious play.

A clergyman told me the other day that Lent was no longer a season of fasting, but one of Bridge Whist and Euchre.

Week-end parties have Bridge Whist as a sole purpose. Rooms are hired and furnished, in all parts of New York city, by fashionable young women who do nothing but gamble there. I was sitting in my carriage not long ago, and, seeing a young friend of whom I am fond walking up the Avenue, I invited her to drive with me. But she waved her hand, and exclaimed, "I can't to-day. I've been losing at Euchre, and now I'm going to make it up at Bridge," and she hurried on.

The vices that I have mentioned are the weeds growing up in the garden of American womanhood that strangle and dwarf the flower. They spring from the seeds of selfishness and flourish in the soil of idleness. They are directly incompatible with the development of beneficence and self-sacrifice.

The American woman did not inherit vices from her ancestors. They are direct imitations and importations, and there is danger of their tainting the whole social mass. So, as a matter of fact, missionaries are needed among the idle rich more than in any other class. It is here the weeding-out process must be carried out. This work belongs to a certain class who must make virtue fashionable in their own set. Many women are awakening to the necessity of this, and with them rests the salvation of woman.

Queen Victoria set her face inflexibly against any breach of the moral code and did more for English civilization than any statesman or scholar. President Roosevelt is setting the pace of higher life and decent living.

It is just as easy to make good the fashion as bad. When Mr. Gladstone was urging Parliament to adopt measures for the establishment of the Post-Office Savings-Bank, he was jeered at. A friend said to him: "Why, these colliers and draymen and all that class of men spend their nights and their money in the public houses, like their fathers before them. You can't change that traditional habit." "It's just as easy to make virtue fashionable as it is to make vice fashionable," replied the optimistic Mr. Gladstone. "These people must be taught the habit of saving instead of spending." The Postal System was adopted, and some ten years ago there were many millions of pounds sterling on deposit with the Government to the credit of the masses. Now, when you reflect that that vast sum had been diverted from the public house, that it represented a transmutation of vice into virtue, its true significance may be grasped.

The idle rich are no more vicious than the idle poor, but they are much more lacking in sympathy with one another. A rich woman is not different from a poor woman except in the matter of money, and one of the greatest barriers to her usefulness as a missionary among her less fortunate sisters is her failure to realize this truth. One should remember that in America what is called "blue blood" is distributed through both classes—with a preponderance of it, perhaps, among the unmoneyed class.

Woman has advanced greatly, not so much mentally as

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towards emancipation, in the last twenty years. This emancipation has thrust upon her responsibilities which demand superior mental equipment. Twenty-one years ago, I did not think that women were qualified for suffrage; but the strides they have made since then in the acquirement of business methods, in the management of their affairs, in the effective interest they have evinced in civic matters, and the way in which they have mastered parliamentary methods, have convinced me that they are eminently fitted to do men's work in all purely intellectual fields. When I was a girl, the schools for young ladies in America taught deportment, crocheting, French, music and what might be called the gentler arts. But now they teach higher mathematics. Woman is entering the domain of high professionalism, and her mind is expanding accordingly. When I first acted as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Woman's Hospital, there were twelve women and thirteen men on the Board. The male portion of the Board was made up of lawyers mainly, and at Board meetings the women were outargued by them, and voted as they did.

The field of labor for the women of the idle class is vast. There is no village so small, no town so free from corruption that it does not afford ample opportunity for missionary work. Every woman can make her village or town better. She can form a "sunshine club," the individual rays of which may penetrate and cheer the sick chamber or render the abode of poverty less desolate. Her excuse for interesting herself in civic affairs is that her husband has paid taxes or rent, which is the same thing; and it is just as much her duty to see that he receives full value for his money as it is to see that the butcher does not cheat him. She must see to it that the village is properly policed, so that her daughter may be protected from ruffianism, or that her son may be guarded from evils that lurk in the dark. Her husband has paid for good sanitary conditions, and she must see to it that the money appropriated for that purpose is properly expended, so that the health of her family may be secured against infection.

The tender-heartedness of woman will naturally lead her to use her influence in bringing almost a humane treatment of animals. Taking as her example King Edward and Queen Alexandra and our own President Roosevelt, she should set her face against the docking of horses. Yet is she almost solely responsible for the equally barbarous fashion of wearing for her adornment the plumage of small birds. This cruel practice she should unhesitatingly abolish.

It is impossible to classify the talents of women, to differentiate their quality from that of the talents of men. But there are fields of work that have formerly been preempted by men which I think obviously belong to women. Among them is preeminently the protection of the home. American mothers must guard their offspring against the debilitating effects of the poisoned milk that is literally flooding the country. If a woman cannot do anything else, ler her be a milk-inspector. If she lives on the farm, let her see to it that her husband sells pure milk; if she lives in the city, let her see to it that the milkman does not put his cans of milk in or near infected quarters.

In our great cities many women are necessarily lonely or are forced into vicious society. And this loneliness is not ameliorated by attending balls and other entertainments. It is unfortunate that men of small means, having to attend business, must leave their wives much alone in hotels and boarding-houses. It is not woman's nature to be philosophically resigned to solitude. She must have society, preferably good, but she must have society. An inexperienced man is apt to neglect his wife and still expect her to be as chaste as Lucrece. There is a great field for work among the unemployed wives of salaried men. If the idle rich woman would only learn to look upon her sister of this class as the daughter of a woman like herself, coequal with her before God, she would take her by the hand and draw her out from her solitude, and by so doing reap a reward in the unfolding of her own character.

One cannot but regard the wonderful work of the Salvation Army in the reclamation of fallen women as a direct refutation of the contention of sociologists in certain European countries that vice is necessary, and of the inevitable and horrible deduction that we must permit our sisters to lie where they have fallen. That may do very well for Europe, but we Americans stoutly deny that vice is in the slightest degree necessary to civilization. We point with pride to the result of the inflexible rule of the Puritans. Occasionally, there comes to one the astoundingly idiotic suggestion of the licensing of a certain form of vice as a sanitary measure. Imagine American mothers teaching their sons the Lord's Prayer, and then sending them to the Legislature to make laws for licensing the sacrifice of the purity and happiness of their sisters. No: sanitary conditions come from within; they spring from the moral nature of man. I may be charged with idealism. If so, I acknowledge the compliment. But I am also intensely practical. I believe in striking at the root of evil. Woman must be rigid, uncompromising in her attitude towards vice. No great movement ever succeeded that evinced the slightest moral laxity.

In reading a little book called "Precipices," a sketch of Salvation Army social work, one is astounded and inspired by the courage, the kindness, the indomitable perseverance of the uniformed sister in reclaiming fallen women, and by the illimitable patience with which she keeps on reclaiming them as they fall again and again, until the cure is permanent. And a consideration of the abuse that the rescuing sister suffers, the appalling degradation which confronts her in her efforts, compels a recognition of the fact that no other motive than the divine sense of duty could sustain her through the ordeal.

The only remedy for the social evil in any Anglo-Saxon country is apparently in the education of the children—boys and girls. This teaching must be candid, drastic. Half of the difficulty attending it comes from a very natural, but very cowardly, sense of delicacy about discussing such topics. One should remember that any subject can be discussed with dignity by a lady.

Woman has brains, energy and courage, and no one has any moral right to waste time. Time is the most precious thing in the world, because it is the only thing that cannot be replaced when lost. Woman is responsible in proportion to the wealth and time at her command. While one woman is working for bread and butter, the other must devote her time to the amelioration of the condition of her laboring sister. This is the moral law. □

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MARJORIE WELLS

Are Ten Too Many?

1929

I suppose I am old-fashioned. I am quite sure many of my friends and neighbors think so, while some of them do not stop at so kindly and sympathetic a judgment. I am aware sometimes of their pity, condescension and amusement, and even of contempt and a veiled antagonism.

The reason is that I have a large family, stretching already as far as the eye can reach and with the end not yet in sight. In an age when two or three children are considered the civilized and respectable achievement, I have ten to date and am still unchastened and unrepentant. I am even mildly ostentatious about it, and find a reprehensible satisfaction in projecting my oversized family like a bombshell into polite society, where it is variously greeted with congratulation, consternation, interrogation or condemnation. The friendlier reactions concede that this is indeed an old-fashioned family, supposedly endowed with indefinite but admirable old-fashioned virtues and advantages. But I am aware of other attitudes beneath the polite surprise or careful congratulations of casual conversation. There are those who clearly count me as no better than a deluded female, unkindly outlawed from the pleasures and privileges of modern life by an unfortunate biological habit. There are some who would weep for me and with me, if I gave them but half a chance. There are others who probably think me a scab and blackleg, traitor and backslider, in these days of feminine emancipation.

I have no intention of apologizing for my family. I have never done so nor tried to keep it a secret, which would in fact be difficult. I am, indeed, candidly and brazenly proud of it. A large family is liable to have that effect upon its perpetrator and proprietor. All ordinary parents are publicly proud of two children or even three. Most parents become a little reticent about five or six. But when the score mounts up to nine or ten, parental pride gets a second wind. There is something monumental about such a family, and it is asking too much of human nature to expect its parents to keep it entirely to themselves.

But I sometimes feel like speaking out against the undertones of unpleasantness which often answer my parental pride. Especially I resent the insinuation that I am somehow related to the old lady who lived in a shoe, who had so many children because she didn't know what to do. In this age of grace and gossip, ignorance must keep company with stupidity in order to preserve itself entire. There is a clinical candor about our reading, our conversation, and even the advertising in the most respectable of our family magazines, which makes it difficult to retain the innocence of ignorance unless one is firmly determined upon it. Ordinary curiosity has been enough to introduce me to Dr. Marie Stopes and all her works, and the name of Margaret Sanger is not as unfamiliar to me as might be supposed. I am, in fact, reasonably sure that I know as much about keeping the stork from the door as do most of my friendly and unfriendly critics, and that I know vastly more about practical biology than most of these young modernists who regard me with such a pitying and patronizing eye.

So in the natural course of events I come upon Mrs. Sanger's latest book, *Motherhood in Bondage*, and am thereby much tried and exercised. It is a tragic and terrible book. It is made up principally of letters—hundreds of them—from women and some few men overburdened with the bitternesses of too much parenthood. It is a grim collection of hard luck stories, every one of them outlining a human tragedy. It is a compilation of case records in marital misery, full of pain and poverty and protest against the blind inhumanity of natural law. Its purpose is clear, even though it is published in a country where there are still some things which must not be talked about. The letters are chosen and grouped to prove that families should be made to measure and not left to luck or the lack of it. It is overpowering in its picture of human misery and entirely sincere in its conviction that something should be done about it, but its specific plea is for public approval and dissemination of a practical doctrine of Birth Control.

I am really not much interested in this particular question. It seems likely that the curse of Anthony Comstock might well be lifted in this age of reason, but it also seems likely that a certain amount of damage might result from too much eating of the tree of knowledge. It strikes me as a delicate problem, as delicate as some of those which every parent knows who tries to bring youngsters safely through adolescence. As I have suggested above, the vast majority of parents have access to all the knowledge there is on this subject, and the fact that it is sometimes a little difficult to get at is probably a moral safeguard rather than a national calamity. Knowledge is an excellent thing, but it won't cure all our personal or social diseases. It never has. And it is often, much too often, turned to evil account.

But my complaint against Mrs. Sanger's book is that it lacks a certain letter. I have never felt the urge to write to Mrs. Sanger, but I think now that I should have done so. I should have written in the following fashion and thereby contributed my share to the great American tragedy.

DEAR MRS. SANGER:

I am only thirty-eight years old and have been married less than fifteen years, but we already have ten children and I am beginning to feel that there is no reason why I should not have ten more. When we married, my husband was earning just ten dollars a week as a schoolteacher, and at the end of ten years he was getting less than three thousand a year and we had seven children. We have never had any income except what we could earn, so I have always done practically all my own work, including the cleaning, cooking, washing and everything. For years we hardly ever went to a theatre or concert or took a vacation. Four years ago my husband lost his job and had to start in an entirely new line, but the children kept right on coming. Now we have ten of them and the oldest not yet fourteen, while the youngest is about six

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months. During the time before the last one was born my husband was taken ill and had to go away to a hospital for a serious operation, and my mother was also taken ill and died. I had to let my own work go in order to help nurse her. Through all this trouble I wondered many times what would be the effect of it all on the new arrival.

When I was married I knew very little about marriage and all its responsibilities, and had to learn as best I could by experience. Just now I have a cold in the head and the boys have kicked a football through the living-room window and the dishes aren't washed and the coal man has sent a bill with "Please Remit" on it, and what's going to become of us I don't know.

Perhaps Mrs. Sanger would have published this confession; perhaps she wouldn't. The point is that while its facts are all true, its implications are all false. I don't feel sorry for myself, and I never did. There's nothing the matter with my family, and there's nothing the matter with me that I can blame on the family. There's nothing the matter with the latest arrival, who is a healthy, happy, good-looking little rascal and the pride and joy of the whole household. Other people may feel sorry for us because we have practically the largest and noisiest family east of the Mississippi, but we don't feel sorry for ourselves. We have a tremendously good time with our family, and we don't much care who knows it.

The trouble with all this loose talk and careful propaganda about Birth Control is that it implies, more or less subtly, that the large family is in itself a dangerous, undesirable and even reprehensible performance. It is inferred and even stated that overproduction involves a tempting of Providence, an invitation to poverty, and a gamble with maternal health and childhood happiness. It ignores all chances that the large family may have positive and intrinsic advantages of its own, and its own rewards and compensations for all the toil and trouble attached to it. It implies—without actually saying so—that the small family is the right family and the large family the wrong family, and that therefore people like myself are in some sense a public nuisance or a public menace.

So although I have been steadfastly uninterested in Birth Control propaganda as such, I find myself compelled to have some ideas on the subject. I have, in fact, been publicly debating the problem in a definitely practical fashion through fifteen years and by means of ten children. Every new bud on the family tree has been not only a hostage given to fortune but a challenge and even an affront to all these people who seem to know what is good for me and good for my children and good for the human society in which we all find ourselves. Mrs. Sanger might conceivably approve of my family, but only as an exception to prove her rule, for we are fundamentally on opposite sides of the argument. I am doubtful of my abilities as a debater, and therefore when the subject came my way I have kept quiet. But there is nothing quiet about a family of ten. It is an assertive, obvious and concrete argument in itself.

But apart from particular cases and present company, I feel that the vital consideration in the Birth Control discussion is the matter of proper proportion. Nobody denies that there are many mothers who have more children than they know what to do with. Everybody must agree that the world holds too much misery which is a by-product of unrestricted childbearing, particularly now that Mrs. Sanger has filled a book with it. But it should be remembered that other books of human misery might be filled readily enough with the dreadful things wrought by tight shoes, aspirin tablets, radio sopranos, home cooking and cocktail shakers, without actually proving anything except that it is all too bad.

Mrs. Sanger has collected abnormalities and horrors in such quantity that the whole of humanity seems tarred with the same brush. In effect she preaches that uncalculating parenthood is a sort of universal disease, which can only be relieved by the universal practice of her pet doctrine. She is deeply distressed by all the troubles she has seen, so that her theories have become badly scrambled with her emotions and she attempts to be both sympathetic and scientific at the same time. Therefore she at last makes the usual mistake of women who attempt the guidance of public opinion, and tries to transfer to public responsibility what is essentially and inevitably a private and local problem.

I have said that this seems to be a matter of proportion, and it is certainly so in a private sense. Every married woman must draw up her own balance sheet of debits and credits in this business of motherhood. Every married man must do the same. Children are both a liability and an asset, and in order to reckon the net values of the family—natural, moral and spiritual—the parents must have an honest show-down with their own consciences and convictions. What they do about it is their own business, and should have nothing to do with the current fashions in families or the legal status of this doctrine or that. When the subsurface agitation in favor of Birth Control begins to assume shape as a popular notion that three or four or five children are enough, it takes away from the most conscientious parents something of the freedom to which they are entitled.

It is a matter of proportion. Each and all of us have our own scale of values by which we measure the worth of the pleasures, privileges, duties, comforts and satisfactions of life. Our attitude toward children, real and potential, will reflect pretty closely what we think and feel about these various elements. It really has nothing to do with the rights and wrongs of Birth Control. Birth Control, rightly or wrongly, is no more than another device which we use or decline in deference to our sense of what is important. We ought, in honesty to ourselves, to resent the suggestion that it is anything more, that it is an article of faith for the scientific age. We ought, in a word, to feel free and be free to take it or leave it alone.

So though I do not believe in Birth Control, neither do I disbelieve in it. To announce that I believe in it means that I believe in it for somebody else, which seems to me to be none of my business. It happens that I don't believe in it for myself, under present circumstances and conditions, but that also is an entirely personal conviction and one which has no relation or importance to any other woman's problem. But I do believe that the contraceptionists are unwittingly making things uncomfortable for

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the large family, by giving scientific encouragement to the human liking for scandals. People do love to think the worst of their neighbors, and there is no such likely target as the parents of a large family. There ought, I think, to be a closed season for such parents, during which it would be a breach of the peace for mere theorists to add bedevilment to their burdens. Bachelors, maiden ladies and scientific reformers should in particular be warned to stay off the matrimonial grass where they have no proper business.

It is a long time since any one made out a case for the large family. The argument has all been on the other side. I find at least four general arguments in favor of the small family. (1) Its cultural advantages. (2) Its possibilities for health and intelligence. (3) Economic necessities. (4) Racial hazards and obligations. To keep my conscience clear I must make some sort of a settlement with each of them.

The eugenists tell us that the small family is the really civilized achievement, in the face of all experience that one child or two may be totally unpleasant products and that the small family is perilously near to extinction with the first epidemic of whooping cough. They argue that the small family gets its full rations of educational and other advantages and turns out a higher type of citizen thereby. The answer is that it doesn't. Other things being equal the large family gives better social training than the small one, and offers more stimulus to imagination, enterprise and intelligence during the most critically formative years. My own children knock the corners from each other, sharpen their wits on each other, and practise the social virtues on each other. They must necessarily learn to work together and play together. They must take small responsibilities early, and their affections and ambitions have small chance to get self-centred. It is possible that they may go short some day on the high-priced privileges of education and travel, but it won't matter much. They are learning already how to find their way about and make themselves a place in the world, and they are learning it at home.

In regard to the second point I take refuge in the record. My children are perfectly healthy and reasonably intelligent, and the later ones seem to have a slight edge on the earlier experiments. The suggestion that they might have been more so had there been fewer of them does not much interest me. Children, it seems, are healthy and intelligent principally according to the health and intelligence of their immediate ancestors and the parental progression in mutual development and usefulness, and if there is any rhyme or reason to the matter the later child has the best chance. Concerning my own health I am equally free from anxiety. I weighed a scant hundred pounds on my wedding day, but since I have increased by nearly four per cent per annum the family regards me as a good investment.

The third argument concerns the economic probabilities. To this my answer is that we have never yet been justified by our income in extending our family. We have extended the family, and then done what might be done to bring the income up to scratch. We were as financially embarrassed by one child as we are by ten, and we shall probably continue that way. Nothing in our married experience leads us to suppose that a small family guarantees financial independence or a large family forbids it; the two things simply don't have any cause-and-effect connection. We have no certainty as to what the morrow may bring forth, any more than do our more cautious neighbors, but we are sure of this, that the constant challenge and spur of increasing responsibilities and necessities have been fundamentally good for us. If we ever amount to anything—socially, financially, and particularly as to character and worth—my husband and I are agreed that we shall blame it on the children.

I am not entirely clear about the racial obligations involved in the doctrine of the small family. Very few people seem to be clear on the matter, with the exception of Havelock Ellis and a few others whose opinion, I suspect, is a fairly academic one. But I understand that a certain Mr. Malthus, aided and abetted by higher mathematics, has demonstrated that the human race, unless checked in its mad career by Act of Congress, is due either to be squeezed to death or starved to death. This is important if true, though it is probably not my business. But it may not be true. History is full of the dead bones of

WOMEN ON SCHOOL BOARDS (1905)

KATE GANNETT WELLS

The position of women on School Boards, a natural and logical office for women, is still somewhat anomalous, unless they are content to fill an advisory role. In that capacity, if their counsel is offered tentatively, it is heard respectfully; and the chances are that it is likely to be finally adopted as the joint product of Committee sessions rather than as the outcome of feminine initiative.

The success of a woman on a School Board depends chiefly upon how far she is willing at first to subordinate herself, until she has understood her new environment, school legislation, present fads and prospective ideals. If she begins her official duties with the tacit assumption, even if only to herself, that she knows it all and that it is incumbent upon her to reform methods and measures instantly, she soon finds her sphere of usefulness narrowed.

If, on the other hand, she observes carefully, questions circumspectly, keeps her inferences to herself, does not generalize inductively until she has a wide acquaintance with facts and persons, is neither eloquent nor personal in discussion and votes without aggressiveness, she is sure to grow in favor with Boards, Committees, teachers, parents and pupils.

She should no more ignore her sex than she should obtrude it. When a woman proudly states that she has been treated by her masculine coworkers as if she were a man, her declaration is no compliment to them and is a condemnation of herself. Having been elected because she is a woman, she should never give away her dignity by belittling her point of view as a woman.

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prophecies that have come to a sad end and the future is full of unknown quantities to upset all human calculations. Further, I am impressed by the obvious standstill and even retrogression of population increase within my own range of experience. Despite all my own contributions to the cause, the generation to which my children belong is falling short of its predecessors. There are families of my near acquaintance that are literally dying out; and nobody knows why. Civilization, I suppose, is taking its own toll by many secret ways, without much direct help from statisticians and scientists.

One other thing I have discovered by dabbling a little in vital statistics. The apparently alarming population increases of the past generation or so don't mean all that they seem to. Many children were born, for our country attracted chiefly the young and hardy; few old people died, for the dying generation belonged to a previous period of much smaller population. But now the numerical advantage shifts up the line, aided as it has been by the lengthening of the expectation of life during the past generation, and a lot of people must die soon as the consequence of having been born in the busiest times of the last century. Looking around a small circle of acquaintance, particularly in our cities, I can't see that the coming generation will do more than compensate for the ordinary wear and tear of time on the ones that are passing. My friends and acquaintances aren't having too many babies to take the place of all the uncles and aunts and grandparents and such whose time is nearly over. So much for statistics, which don't mean much anyway.

To get back to my own family, which—as usual—is in danger of neglect whenever I mess around with speculations, the four popular arguments in favor of the job-lot of children simply don't apply, so far as I am concerned. And I am aware of substantial arguments on the other side. I leave out of the discussion certain spiritual considerations which are entirely personal, and I prefer to ignore all unconvincing statistics about everything. I rest the case for the large family on the simple fact that children are desirable because they are pleasant and stimulating things to have around the house. They vastly increase the happiness of life. Happiness is made up of responsibility, ambition and achievement, of mutual appreciations that are a bond and blessing for two people who understand each other, and of numerous intelligent appreciations. A family of ten children will supply these in quantity and variety.

Children are, of course, sometimes a nuisance and always an embarrassment. They keep you out of bridge clubs, poker games, golf tournaments, uplift movements and the movies, and even out of the divorce court. They insist that you shall make a reasonable attempt to live happily with your own husband or wife, which is not a very dramatic, exciting or fashionable accomplishment. They demand that you shall devote most of your time to plain and unvarnished hard labor, but if this is undesirable or abnormal then the world was very badly designed on the first morning of creation. And they keep it up without much interruption until they pack up and leave you, which is an eventuality to be regarded as philosophically as possible.

I concede that my philosophy, such as it is, ignores such charming contingencies as inherited lunacy, disease, and abject poverty; also pathological abnormality, confirmed criminality, and inherent immorality. These things do not belong in my personal problem; they belong rather in Mrs. Sanger's book. But I claim that the code of normal people is not to be determined by the behavior and condition of the unfortunates.

For myself I am deeply thankful for all those enriching accidents which permit me the pride and delight of an old-fashioned family. I admit that I am fortunate—fortunate in having good health, a home in the country, kindly and forbearing friends, and a calm and perhaps cowlike disposition. For some of these advantages I thank the children themselves, and my family doctor is inclined to agree with me. And since I am fortunately free of some of the bogies that are frightening family folk out of their proper rights and responsibilities, I can enjoy my family as the veritable "heritage and reward" of the Biblical phrase. For I have found that a real family of children pays an adequate daily dividend of satisfaction and delight, and if you don't believe it you may ask at least one woman who owns one. □

from GREATNESS IN WOMEN (1923)

MARY AUSTIN

It is rather more important for women than for men to know their own greatness, for women, in the nature of the racial experience, have had little incentive to acquire the indispensable faculty for making adherents by which an ideal is made socially coherent.

The only group in which woman has had much experience, the family, is not one to which she has succeeded through any proven fitness. It has been compacted much more by its inner necessities than by any faculty of hers for social correlations, and she has been able to proceed directly to its administration without the expenditure of energy required to bring together and organize unrelated social items. Finally, she has not been required to refer her standards of success in the administration of the family group to any criterions but her own preference. All of this has left her rather at a loss in the selection of leaders who must continually recreate their own groups out of shifting masses, and coördinate them in reference to standards subject to incalculable conditions of change. The man who expects to lead men understands that he must have, first of all, the gift for unifying their desires by making them feel less fragmentary. Now and then there arises a woman, like Frances Willard, endowed with the male faculty; but in all my experience with women I have met but two who could be called natural "spellbinders." At present, the ranks of feminism are crowded with slightly bewildered individuals of more than average capacity, unable to proceed toward well conceived political goals because of their lack of the power to coördinate the masses even of their own sex.

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MARGARET SANGER

Women and Birth Control

1929

I was one of eleven children. My mother died in her forties. My father enjoyed life until his eighties. Seven of my brothers and sisters are still living. If I am not an "old-fashioned" woman, at least I was an old-fashioned child. I have never thought it necessary to call public attention to these circumstances of my life. Not that I am ashamed of them, but, on the other hand, neither am I brazenly proud of them. I do not believe that these facts are sufficient as a foundation upon which to erect a code of morals for all men and women of the future to follow. I do not say: "My mother gave birth to eleven living children, seven of whom are still alive and more or less healthy. Ergo, all women should give birth to eleven or a dozen children." There are, it seems to me, a few other things to consider.

I have been impelled to cast aside my habitual reticence because I have just finished reading a highly personal essay in the March number of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, written by a lady known as Marjorie Wells. Mrs. Wells confesses herself the mother of ten children. Her family stretches "already as far as the eye can reach and with the end not yet in sight." This biological fact seems to endow Mrs. Wells with the glib authority to hand down decisions concerning complex problems which have puzzled humanity since civilization first began. I rejoice with Marjorie Wells in the peace and happiness she has found in her "monumental" family. But I confess that I am not convinced that feminine wisdom increases in direct proportion with the number of one's offspring.

Implicit in Marjorie Wells's confession I discover a certain condescension toward the mothers of smaller families. She knows all there is to know about keeping the stork from the door. She admits her vastly superior knowledge of practical biology. She has read my book *Motherhood in Bondage*, which is a compilation of case records in marital misery, of protests from slave mothers against the blind inhumanity of natural law. From the citadel of her self-satisfaction, Marjorie Wells asserts that my theories have become badly scrambled with my emotions and that I attempt to be "both scientific and sympathetic at the same time"—as though that were quite impossible! I have made, according to Mrs. Wells, "the usual mistake of women who attempt the guidance of public opinion, and try to transfer to public responsibility what is essentially and inevitably a private and local problem."

Intellectually speaking, she "high-hats" me. A mere woman who has borne only three children instead of ten, who can therefore never hope to reach that peak of serene Olympian indifference to the cries and moans of my less fortunate sisters which Marjorie Wells has attained, I cannot hope to equal in dialectic skill a lady who has enjoyed the educational advantages of ten pregnancies. I have not yet attained that point of self-confidence which enables me to cast aside as irrelevant and unimportant the conclusions of scientists who have devoted their lives to the study of genetics, nor can I close my eyes to the statistics of Government workers who have made deep researches into the conditions productive of the alarming maternity death rate in these United States. Having been only one of eleven hungry little brothers and sisters, I was not able to profit by the early educational advantages which Marjorie Wells evidently enjoyed. Her philosophic poise enables her to look upon the birth of a child as "a purely private and local problem." I have always assumed, and I do not believe that I am egregious in this assumption, that the birth of a child is an event of the utmost importance not only to the family into which it is born, but to the community, to the nation, to the whole future of the human race. I agree with President Hoover:

> The ideal to which we should strive is that there shall be no child in America: That has not been born under proper conditions; that does not live in hygienic surroundings; that ever suffers from under-nourishment; that does not have prompt and efficient medical attention and inspection; that does not receive primary instruction in the elements of hygiene and good health; that has not the complete birthright of a sound mind and a sound body; that has not the encouragement to express in fullest measure the spirit within which is the final endowment of every human being.

I suppose those of us who subscribe to these ideas are in the eyes of Marjorie Wells hopeless sentimentalists.

My opponent sharply crystallizes a definite point of view not only concerning the theory and the practice of Birth Control, but toward all the social problems which confront us today. Hers is the attitude of "splendid isolation," of enlightened self-interest, of *laissez-faire*. She tells us in effect that she is the mother of ten healthy children, that she and her husband enjoy from them a daily dividend of satisfaction and delight, and that therefore she "should worry" about the behavior and condition of the less fortunate. "Am I my sister's keeper?" asks in effect Marjorie Wells.

It is late in the day to point out that all human experience teaches that an attitude of "splendid isolation" can no longer be logically maintained by any individual in the face of the problems which confront American civilization. If only from the motive of self-protection the well-born and the well-bred can no longer shirk responsibility

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concerning "the behavior and the condition of the unfortunates."

Time after time, it has been demonstrated in all the countries of Western civilization, that as we descend the social scale the birth-rate increases. Dependent, delinquent and defective classes all tend to become more prolific than the average normal and self-dependent stratum of society. With this high birth rate is correlated a high infant mortality rate. This law is true in all countries. More children are born; more babies die. So likewise, the maternal mortality rate jumps correspondingly. Out of the surviving infants are recruited the morons, the feeble-minded, the dependents, who make organized charities a necessity, and who later fill prisons, penitentiaries and State homes. To compute the cost in dollars and cents of these industriously prolific classes to society is beyond human power. Every one of us pays for their support and maintenance. Funds which legitimately should go to pure scientific research, to aid the fine fruition of American civilization, are thus diverted to the support of those who—in all charity and compassion—should never have been born at all.

We cannot ignore, as Marjorie Wells confesses she does, "such charming contingencies as inherited lunacy, disease and abject poverty." They press in upon us on all sides. These things, she says, do not belong in her personal problem. I beg to remind her that they do. For, despite her valiant efforts to bring up her own brood, Mrs. Wells will, in time, find out, if she has not already found out, that the children of the defective and the diseased will crowd into the schoolroom with her own children, and that standards of intelligence must perforce be lowered to meet their limited capacities. The community in which she lives will call upon her to aid the alleviation of the poverty and distress of the all too prolific. Her property and income will be taxed to maintain State institutions for the support of the dependent and the delinquent. She will resent bitterly this enforced expenditure of funds that should go for the higher education and the cultural development of her talented children. That is, if her resources are as limited as she admits them to be. And finally she will discover that her own good luck in life is not the general rule, but a fortunate exception,

upon which it would be the utmost folly to attempt to generalize concerning this exceedingly human race.

"But," she may now retort, "you are speaking dogmatically, making a special plea for public approval of the dissemination of Birth Control." Marjorie Wells is convinced that the cases recorded in my book *Motherhood in Bondage* are abnormalities and horrors, gathered together merely to foist the practice of contraception upon unwilling parents.

Let us turn, then, to less prejudiced and partisan sources. Let us consider the findings of impartial investigators who have no interest in what our critics call propaganda. Let us find out, if we can, the truth concerning the conditions under which children are brought into our American world. For this evidence we need not go far afield. In a recent report published in *The Survey*, Hazel Corbin, R.N., general director of the Maternity Center Association of New York, states that year after year, more than twenty thousand women die from causes due to childbirth—one mother for every one hundred and fifty babies born! The Newton bill had as its aim Government responsibility for the health of American citizens including the special needs of the mothers of the country. This bill died when the last Congress expired. The Sheppard-Towner Act expires June 30, 1929; and unless Congress provides a further Federal subsidy, the Government aid for mothers and children which its funds have furthered during the last six years will be brought to a close.

When correlated with the refusal of State legislatures to consider bills which would make Birth Control education permissive, these facts assume new significance. Our Government pronounces itself unwilling to assume responsibility in alleviating the hazardous trade of maternity. At the same time the State and Federal authorities refuse to countenance legislation which would allow American mothers to help themselves—which would permit them to choose the time and the conditions best suited for the fulfillment of the maternal function. "The birth of a baby is such a common, every-day occurrence," writes Hazel Corbin, "that people do not realize that during pregnancy the margin between health and disease becomes dangerously narrow, and only by skilled medical supervision can the maintenance of health be assured. Every mother in the country needs skilled medical supervision, nursing care and instruction during pregnancy, at delivery, and for the six weeks that follow. Many families do not know of this need. Not all families can provide this care. It is not available at any price in many parts of this rich country. There are no doctors, nurses and midwives properly trained to give adequate care to all mothers."

Yet two million women in America are compelled, by law, to descend annually into the valley of the shadow of death, to bear two million children in a country that has enacted drastic immigration restriction laws to prevent over-population. No: we are not under-populated—there is no need for a "full speed ahead" policy of procreation. Since the relevations of *Motherhood in Bondage* are condemned as exceptional, let us listen further to the testimony of Hazel Corbin: "There are, caring for our mothers, midwives so ignorant and superstitious as to

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suppose hemorrhage can be controlled by placing an axe upside down under the patient's bed. *Of about fifty thousand practising midwives only a small portion are well-trained and the majority are untrained—yet in most instances they are licensed or registered by their States.*"

Let us turn to the testimony of Julia Lathrop, ex-chief of the Children's Bureau, under whose supervision Government agents made extensive investigations into the conditions surrounding infant mortality in eight typical cities of our country. Infant mortality rates concern all children who die during the first five years of life. On the whole, according to Miss Lathrop in *The Woman's Journal*, the evidence is overwhelming that poverty, ignorance, or both, lack of medical and nursing care, unwholesome living conditions, overworked mothers, remoteness from doctors and nurses in rural areas, and other types of inability to give babies needed care are in marked degree coincident with high infant mortality rates. A vast number of babies and of mothers die needlessly every year in this country. This fact is well-known to statisticians, doctors and to some social workers, but details as to social and economic conditions under which the parents live are seldom disclosed or frankly discussed.

Today the situation remains fundamentally unnoticed. Women clamor for deliverance from compulsory motherhood. Yet dull-witted legislators, both State and Federal, refuse to sanction the dissemination of harmless contraceptives to those unable or unwilling, due to the conditions discovered by Government agents, to undergo a pregnancy that may be fatal to mother or child. Yet measures aiming to improve by Governmental agencies dysgenic conditions surrounding maternity and infancy are condemned and defeated as "paternalistic." The situation calls for a Shaw or a Swift.

Perhaps this dilemma has been created not so much by the laws and the legislators themselves as by the smug and bland indifference of women themselves—of those fortunate, well-bred, well-educated women who refuse to concern themselves with the sordid tragedies of those they consider their social inferiors.

Whether Birth Control is right or wrong, moral or immoral, a need or a nuisance, one thing is certain. Mothers of ten or of one can no longer, by the mere exercise of a function common to all living creatures consider themselves exempt from social responsibility. As Miss Lathrop has expressed it: "One thing is in my opinion certain—only mothers can save this cooperative work for maternity and infancy. If prosperous, intelligent mothers do not urge the protection of the lives of all mothers and all babies, why should we expect Congress to come unasked to their aid?"

Though Julia Lathrop is here making a plea only for Government protection of maternity and infancy, the same truth is applicable to the doctrine of Birth Control. The most stubborn opposition to Birth Control has come, not from the moralists nor the theologians, the most distinguished of whom recognize its legitimate necessity, but from those women who, like Marjorie Wells, "know as much about keeping the stork from the door as my most friendly and unfriendly critics," yet nevertheless assume that such knowledge, simple, harmless and hygienic as it is, must be kept for the privileged few and from the very women most in need of it. Such an attitude seems to grow out of a frantic feminine desire to retain a certain superiority, social or otherwise, over one's less fortunate neighbors.

Even for that very limited and very special type of woman who is gifted by nature and natural inclination—and also by wealth—to undertake a specialized career in maternity and to become the mother of ten or a dozen children, there is need for the practice of Birth Control. For if she be intelligent and farseeing, such a woman will recognize the necessity of "spacing" her children, of recuperating her full physical strength and psychic well-being after the birth of one child before undertaking the conception of another. Mothers of large families have written me expressing their gratitude for the benefits of Birth Control. It has enabled them to give each of their children a good start in life. It has prevented crowding, and has moreover permitted them to enjoy marital communion which would otherwise have been impossible. But let us recognize today—with the ever-increasing cost of living, and the high cost of childbirth—that the large family must more and more be considered the privilege of the moneyed class. A large family, if the income is small, is a crime against the children born into it. I was one of eleven, and I believe that I am slightly more entitled to speak on this subject than Marjorie Wells, who is, after all, only the mother of ten! I may be prejudiced, but I feel that the testimony of a child born into a large family is of more interest and importance than that of the mere progenitor of a large family. It all depends on the point of view!

American civilization has long passed the pioneer stage of its development. We no longer have a vast continent to populate. We no longer need mere numbers. But we are only beginning to realize that there are other values in life than those of mere quantity. We have not yet outgrown the adolescent habit of worshipping the biggest this, the largest that, the most of the other thing. So I think no one need take any excessive pride in the production of a large family, even though the rotogravure sections of our Sunday newspapers will undoubtedly, for the delight and amusement of their millions of readers, continue to publish photographs of large families which imitate visually a long flight of steps.

The attitude of those who have been rewarded by life, and cannot see the punishment inflicted upon others reminds me always of Dr. Pangloss in Voltaire's *Candide*. "It has been proved," said Dr. Pangloss, "that things cannot be otherwise than they are; for, everything being made for a certain end, the end for which everything is made is necessarily the best end." And though the world went to wreck and ruin about him, he still maintained that "it does not become me to retract my words. Leibnitz cannot possibly be wrong—the preestablished harmony is the finest thing in the world. All events are inextricably linked together in this best of all possible worlds."

Rather, I think, in this matter of mothers and children—whether we be the mother of ten, or the sister of ten—we must heed the counsel of Candide himself and cultivate our garden. □

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CAROLYN HARDESTY

The Woman Question Today

1987

One of the benefits of returning to these early writings from the NAR is to eavesdrop on the minds that proclaimed what we now think of as history. In their time they were describing the present and discussing the future. For us now, their ideas are artifacts that have contributed to our present lives.

Some of the ideas sound familiar as they have returned again and again during disputes over civil rights; others were apparently invalid in the past and, for whatever reason, have been lost to our current thinking. Summarily, they comprise a part of what we view as the history of women and of the country.

When we consider the essential moments of the women's movement, we see suffrage as the largest single issue for several decades. But we also see women finally allowed to enter educational institutions and to select professional careers, and we see protective legislation evolving into rights for all workers. To look back is to see the compressed successes, like a row of mountain peaks, that have made a difference to the current position of women. But to move back in time to their writings and to reflect on the contexts of those periods, we can more readily understand their impatience, their sadness, their energy and their prodigious efforts. To read their sense of the world is to begin to understand the complexity of their times.

It is important to remember that the articles printed here were published in a journal which has always been edited by men—23 of them during its 172 years of existence. The NAR was one of the most important intellectual magazines in the Nineteenth Century, but it was not in the vanguard of social movements. Started by Boston men intent on breaking from English traditions in order to develop the canon of American writing, the magazine's original goal was to promote good literature. This was done largely by reviewing books (not by assessing a work's merits but by exploring the issues it raised). From its inception in 1815 until 1878 when Allen Thorndike Rice became editor, the NAR's pages were filled primarily by the reviews, with occasional essays on religion, economics and government. Rice developed the magazine into an arena for debate on contemporary issues, and in 1891 circulation reached a peak of 76,000 subscribers.

In the preparation of this special edition, dozens of articles had to be passed over. The largest single category—enough to fill a volume of its own—concerned suffrage. To provide balance, we have selected perspectives from historians, activists, politicians, a minister. And other subjects had to be slighted: materials having to do with literature (an exception is the sidebar on poetry lifted from a longer piece); essays by and about women in other countries. Several articles defied categorizing: "Why Women Cheat at Solitaire" (1927), "Witches Still Live" (1926), "The Woman Puzzle and the College Professor" (1934), "Why Women Make No Sense" (1939), as well as articles on women's clubs, salons, the "Actual" and, later that same year—1904—the "Inferior" position of women in a republic. The titles arouse curiosity, but also suggest a schema of such fallacy lists as appear in deductive reasoning examples.

A particular pleasure in reading through words from bygone eras is the discovery of pieces that in some way shaped our present time. To witness decades-old thought that coincides with, or clearly led to, current thinking gives readers the same suspense audiences get from watching the detective unravel a crime they've already witnessed. When the dominant ideas are set side by side with false trails and wrong-thinking, we're reminded of the kinds of emotional and intellectual appeals, the range of opinions and the complexity of any "current" time. Taken together, the pieces suggest the evolution of thought about women, their place in the society, their expectations and responsibilities, but also reveal the tenacity of arguments that are dragged out with every political battle made for women's rights—the end of gallantry and chivalry, the end of romance, the end of the family, the spectre of the end of separate bathroom facilities.

Another enlightening aspect of history is the juxtaposition of the values of a particular time against those of our own. Richard Berry's call for a sensible national and permanent costume in "'Style' in Women's Clothes" could be considered a plea for anti-capitalism, and although he pays homage to the ways in which such a fashion could be worn by the poor as well as the wealthy and artistic, that plea may be more democratic than we might have suspected. Laws once determined how economic classes could adorn themselves. Young Ruth Haffield, for example, was summoned to a New England court in 1653 for "excess in apparel." When the court determined that her widowed mother was in fact worth two hundred pounds, the charge was dismissed.

When human beings want something badly (or with the same intensity *don't* want it), they devise an array of arguments, some of them wise and humane and some of them desperate and shameful. The woman question,

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when it addressed suffrage, seemed to split in two: Why *shouldn't* women vote and Why *should* women vote? Answers to the negative question tended to cluster around debauchery of the feminine sensibility, assumptions of their dependence upon husbands' opinions, and bigotry. The "positive" side sometimes called on a more humane foundation of ethics, though it, too, was subject to the worst sorts of arguments—e.g., women should vote to counter the rights of others, particularly black men and "ignorant" immigrants. These articles contain most of the reasonings—by specifics or in kind—that were used to win suffrage. The warning that the Catholic church would rule America because of women's inclination to adhere to the advice of priests is not unlike the despicable plea by some women that their having the vote would keep down the black man's voice in the South.

The women who gathered at Seneca Falls in 1848 did not arrive with the goal of drafting a demand for enfranchisement. The purpose of the convention, as outlined by planners Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott and Jane Hunt, was to "discuss the social, civil and religious condition and rights of women." Our tendency to look back on that historic convention and see only the beacon of suffrage is likely an insult to the participants. The Declaration of Sentiments written there was based on the Declaration of Independence, and it accused men—in the same way King George had been accused—of usurping civil participation and educational opportunities; of creating a double moral standard, which illegalized certain activities for women while allowing other crimes to be committed with impunity so long as they occurred in the presence of the husband; of depriving her of participation in church activities and "taking on the role of Jehovah" in defining her sphere of action; and finally of endeavoring "to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life."

One of the most sweeping arguments in favor of suffrage was that in order to further implement the power women exercised in reforming the country, they needed the tool of the vote. Another common argument was that women deserved it as a reward for their fitness as citizens. Most typical, of course, was the demand as a right. After the convention at Seneca Falls, other gatherings were held and similar resolutions were passed. At the 1889 National American Woman Suffrage Association convention, Olympia Brown, a Universalist minister, compared the circumstances and privileges of women and the foreign-born. Women were the educated, the land-owners, the taxpayers, but they were not the voters. Suffragist leader Carrie Chapman Catt in 1894 cited the fact that immigrant men outnumbered women seven to one; women needed to vote to keep the nation from being run by "slummers." And at the NAWSA convention in 1903, Belle Kearney warned of blacks gaining money and power, and urged that white supremacy could only be maintained by giving the vote to women. Such arguments were in use from reconstruction until 1910. Meanwhile, others saw the danger in such arguments: Helen Philleo Jenkins said, "Ignorant women deserve the same powers as ignorant men."

*

While the reform movement effected changes in many areas of society, not all reformers were interested in suffrage, though there were some links. Generally, the roots of suffrage grew from the unhappy condition of women, and much of their misery was blamed on the actions of men. Francis Parkman nods toward the need to reform some of the notions ruling Nineteenth Century men. As Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Professor of History and Psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania, and others have noted, the Cult of True Womanhood and the strictures placed on the roles of women in the early 19th century found a legitimate expression in the reform movement.

One of the groups devoted precisely to that end in New York was the Female Reform Society. Its goals were to extirpate sexual license and the double standard from American Society. The group was formed in 1834 by women who had worked on such efforts for over two years, and the group used such tactics as raiding houses of prostitution and lecturing both clients and servers. Smith-Rosenberg, in her 1985 book, *Disorderly Conduct*, wrote, "American women would no longer willingly tolerate that traditional—and role-defining—masculine ethos which allotted respect to the hearty drinker and the sexual athlete. This age-old code of masculinity was as obviously related to man's social preeminence as it was contrary to society's explicitly avowed norms of purity and domesticity." [p.115] The societal mission of these women and

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others such as the WCTU crusaders was valued by the keepers of the democracy's hearth; that they are remembered mostly in ax-wielding caricatures is an irony of our age.

With the successes of their activities on behalf of the misfortunate, many reformers began to want more political control of their own lives. Margaret Sanger, for instance, became an advocate for birth control after working as a nurse on New York's Lower East Side, where she witnessed the poverty, illness and death that resulted from unplanned pregnancies. She was prosecuted for writing an "obscene" (as defined by the infamous Comstock law) pamphlet, "Family Limitation." And in 1914 she published a journal called *Woman Rebel*—later, *Birth Control Review*—and was forced to flee to England to avoid further prosecution. Lucy Stone worked as an Abolitionist, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, as a child in her father's law office, saw how women were denied legal rights. Julia Ward Howe was an advocate of world peace and believed that if women could free themselves from male domination, they could use their greater moral strength to achieve it.

Has the woman question been answered? Are the problems solved? Does equality exist in America? Or elsewhere? One time-honored measure is numbers and their changes over time. The fact that a hundred years ago women were not allowed to attend colleges, set beside the present fact that 49 percent of all baccalaureate degrees are awarded to women, is meaningful. We assume numbers and attitudes are to some extent related, and we can be heartened by the societal shift supporting that. But that a large number of female college freshmen believe equality has been achieved, that they expect their future spouses to participate in care of the home, that they can move into any professional field they choose, may be premature if not overly-optimistic. The fact is that the topic is not yet closed. In all forms of media, women are praised for or warned against trying to have it all. But men have never been given such advice.

Current statistics from a range of sources reveal that economic, civil and religious treatment of women still draws circles of privilege or oppression around them. It continues to be men who predominate in the running of government, men who both manage and present news (and men's games that find the prominent position in national and local news programs), men who run the world of business and finance. It is not that women are incapable or legally deprived of doing these things, nor that women are not involved in or even pivotal in these activities; but the numbers are, for the most part, still a clear minority, and in many fields, assumptions and attitudes still legislate against women; where inroads are narrowest, successes are still often greeted with headlines. (Will we ever see MAN APPOINTED HEAD OF HOSPITAL?) The complaints of 140 years ago have been addressed and some have been completely attended to, but the fact that women still raise objections should not be a surprise.

To return to educational issues: in 1983, 49.4 percent of the master's degrees were awarded to women, but only 29.5 percent of the doctoral degrees. Yet in the face of opposition from both historical habit and the ideas held by respected leaders of society, it is remarkable that women's entrance into higher education has been even this successful. Nineteenth Century thinkers such as G. Stanley Hall, an esteemed educator, promoted the idea that teachers of women ought to concentrate on intuition rather than intellect. Another, Edward Thorndike, an educational psychologist, believed the intellectual training was socially wasteful since women had mediocre abilities.

Women's chosen fields of study indicate that the present is a transition rather than a final goal. Women take baccalaureate degrees in education more than twice as often as the next most popular degree in the social sciences. Health professions follow, and then come business and management. Education continues to be the most popular major at the master's level, followed by public affairs and services (social work), then health professions, business and management, letters, and library science. At the doctoral level, these fields are the leaders, but they are competed against by the biological and physical sciences, educational psychology, letters, social sciences. The diversification eventually reveals itself. Yet, even though nearly a third of doctoral degrees are awarded to women, another lag haunts them: women constitute only 9.5 percent of the nation's full professors.

Employment is another standard measure of looking at matters of equality. The leading occupations, accounting for 32.46 percent of working women, are: secretary, elementary teacher, bookkeeper, cashier, office clerk, registered nurse, waitress, and nursing aide. The raw numbers range from 3.8 to 1.1 million for each category.

That these positions can be easily adapted to the disruptions caused by parenting is an old and weary excuse. Many of the employment opportunities for men are also seasonal and temporary and interchangeable, but men in construction or housepainting or delivering earn three to four times as much as women doing office or restaurant work.

The crux of the matter in many eyes is wages. Women are paid less for their unskilled labors than men are for theirs. Women still earn, on average, just above 53 cents for every dollar men earn. In 1929, Nelle Swartz, director of Women in Industry for the New York State Department of Labor, reported wages for a variety of factory and office positions in New York City. In the paper box industry, 80 percent of the women earned less than $25 per week while 60 percent of the men earned over $30. Nine percent of the men earned over $50; no women were paid that much. Many of the workers were engaged in identical activities. In other industries, figures were more drastic. Printing and paper goods were the worst with men earning $42.22 and women $18.88. The reasons for the disparity were the vast availability of women who would work and their tendency to devalue their own abilities.

Current political statistics provide another measure of change in women's lives. In 1984, 52.3 percent of American women were eligible to vote. Of that number 69.3 percent reported being registered. The Midwest, Northwest and two New England states lead the pack, with Alabama and Mississippi close behind. North

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Dakota has the highest figure: 91.6 percent of eligible females are registered to vote; Minnesota has 85.5. Male percentage of registered voters exceeds the female in only three states, Wyoming (an ironic twist since Wyoming was the first state to ratify suffrage for women), Tennessee, and Kentucky.

Percentage of voters is, alas, not correspondingly reflected in office-holding. Women comprise only 14.6 percent of the state legislators nationwide; the heaviest numbers are in the West, Midwest, New England and Florida. Aspects of that pattern are historical. In 1928, there were 149 woman legislators—20 in Connecticut. That same year thirteen women served in Congress, eight in the House.

Although the women's movement in America is one of the most active in the world, we have by no means always been in the vanguard. The U.S. was the seventeenth country to grant suffrage to women, preceded by New Zealand, Australia, all Scandinavian countries, Canada, Poland and others, beginning in 1893. And the legality of abortion—often considered the primary symbol for women's freedom—carries a wide range of conditions among the world's 172 countries. The 22 most liberal nations, including the U.S., allow abortion contingent on the early stages of pregnancy and certain categories of women. In fifteen countries, abortion is completely illegal, and in the rest other conditions are taken into account, such as incest, rape, danger to the mother's life.

One dimension of the women's movement that has no statistical counterpart from a century ago is women's participation in school sports. About 20 percent of eligible girls actively participated in high school sports in 1983. Basketball and outdoor track and field have the highest numbers of participants. Regionally, the highest level of participation occurs in the Northern Plains states and New England; the lowest levels occur in the South, Utah and California.

Ethel Puffer Howes, in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* in 1929, wrote that the woman question had not been answered. Her claim was that a woman's love life was not considered. Integrating love, home, parenthood and chosen work was the goal she saw, the same goal that men demanded of life. In calling for educational plans, professional codes and social arrangements that bring women into full lives, she begins the echo that is still on the lips of young women who want a career, yet want a family, too. The woman question, it seems clear, is still seeking answers. □

TOM CAMBRONNE

A SHELTERED MAN

Cutting photos out of skin magazines, muscles
In his hand crimped from gripping the loop-ends
Of dime-store scissors he bought on a whim.
Procrastinating from doing his laundry,
Self-absorbed, he pressed the cold scissors
Flat against his flat belly. Rain splashed
For hours. A prisoner of his lower bunk
In the dorm, he dropped his hand to his side.
Let metal clink on tile as he turned to his pillow.
Above him posed anonymous nudes of paper:

Glossy, the underside sticky with tape that's got
A smooth side and a sticky side. After unwinding,
He cuts. Shots of his opposite gender grace
The wall below the bed above whose springs sag
When weighted. As he cut along contours
He sat on the bed made earlier and absent-mindedly.
He tired of cutting where the edges disappeared,
A breast lost in dark ink, not smelly with sweat
Like the arm-pits of his shirts. He closed
The magazine without noticing not-yet-cut-out nudes.

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MADISON SMARTT BELL

World Without End

It was the rain that made her decision final. A tap, a blink, and it began to spatter all down the gray length of 14th Street, a cold greasy rain, all wrong for spring. It made everything seem even more insupportable than it had before. Gwen had brought no umbrella and she hurried toward the corner of Sixth. It was dark enough that she could see through the plate-glass window of the coffee shop without being seen. Sinclair bulked in a booth toward the back, waiting because she had kept him waiting. She went in ordinarily as if all were well and joined him.

"Wet?" Sinclair said. His hand covered hers where she had carelessly left it exposed on the table.

"Not too," she said. A waiter appeared with the two heavy plastic-sheathed menus, a good pretext for her to retrieve her hand. She hid inside the menu for a couple of minutes. There was a lot of food to be had, after all, and suddenly she was ravenous. Her stomach clenched and did a flip; then she solved the terrible difficulty of choice by choosing quickly: eggs and home fries, corned beef hash. Comfort food.

The waiter came and went, removing the shield of the menu. Gwen remembered what she'd thought on the drizzling street, *No putting it off this time*, and regretted it a little, looking at Sinclair. Though he was almost completely bald, just a few lonely sprigs of reddish hair scattered across the top of his head, he wasn't bad looking at all. He had a strong face with friendly creases around his mouth and eyes, which were a light, transparent blue. *He'd been good in bed too*, Gwen thought, *too bad about all that*, and realized she'd never be able to touch the food she'd ordered.

"I can't," she said. Sinclair's eyebrows cocked. Gwen lowered her head and turned it so that a fall of pale hair came over one of her eyes. "I don't think . . . I'm not hungry at all, not really," she said, rushing and beginning to mumble too. "Maybe just some coffee?"

"Had a bad day, have you?" Sinclair's tone was even, noncommittal, but Gwen knew this sort of thing infuriated him. She kept her face averted toward the puffy vinyl padding of the booth. Sinclair got up, slapping the flat of his hands on the table top.

"I guess I'd better stop the waiter."

Gwen listened to the sound of his feet going away and kept on watching the patina of dirt on the red leatherette. She knew how he hated to interfere with waiters. Being served by anyone made him nervous and apologetic, even in a coffee shop. Things were getting off to a grand start.

"Coffee's coming." Sinclair was back and Gwen turned and tossed her hair back out of her eyes. Did he get it?

"What's up, Gwendolyn?" His tone remained studiedly neutral. "What gives?"

He'd know, of course, that these sudden reversals of decision meant he was in for a rocky evening at the very least.

"It's no go," she said.

"What's no go?" said Sinclair. But she could tell he did understand her now. It was a relief of some sort to have the subject declared, or not quite relief but that point-of-no-return headiness that one might feel, say, at the top of a ski slope. The one time Gwen had actually skied she'd gone hurtling down with a total lack of grace and skill into a damp white whirling, and later they were telling her how lucky it was she'd only sprained her knee. She dismissed the memory now; it wasn't a good precedent.

"What do I get if I argue?" Sinclair said.

"Failure."

"Thought I might," he said with a half smile.

"Well," Gwen said. The waiter set down her coffee and she warmed her hands on the side of the cup. "It's hard to make this kind of conversation very original. I don't really know what to say anyway."

"Want me to guess?" Sinclair said. He did sound a little edgy now. "Ah . . . it's not working out. Things we do together are getting a little boring and maybe it's us and not them. We fight too much about things that shouldn't matter and we can't make up like we used to. We care for each other but not enough to overcome anything. Couldn't really call it love, could you? You can't

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make up your mind about much of anything lately—you can't make up your mind to stay in this, so you think you'd better get out. We're both a year older than we were when it started and it's not going anywhere much and you need to find—ah, scratch that. Let's just say you're ready to be alone now for a while."

Sinclair reached for his coffee and slopped it all over his hand.

"Dammit," he said. "Am I close enough?" He dried his hands and put them over his face and held them there for a moment. When he took them away his eyes were very tired.

"I'm sorry," he said. "Didn't mean to be nasty."

"You weren't," Gwen said, choking a bit. She hadn't planned on that. "Honestly, Jimmy, you don't have anything to be sorry for. Only it's just—well, you see how it is."

"Yes," Sinclair said. "I do. But you used me. You did use me."

Gwen sighed.

"You always let me," she said.

"I know." Sinclair rattled his blunt fingertips along the Formica table top and let them settle. "Well, there we are."

"Friends?" Gwen said.

"Better give me a little time on that one," Sinclair said, sounding really peevish for the first time. "I was a little bit in love with you, I think, back there for a while."

"Oh, dammit, Jimmy, I'm sorry . . ." Gwen said. "I mean probably I was too."

"Of course friends," Sinclair said, smoothing the table's surface with his palms. "Call me in a week or so. Lunch, whatever. When you want."

"Thanks, then," Gwen said. "It may be more than I deserve."

Sinclair looked up and smiled at her, a wide easy smile without reservations.

"Oh, I wouldn't say that," he said. "Don't worry about it. Take care of yourself, Gwendolyn. Don't let the bastards get you down."

Outside it was raining harder than before and Gwen bought a cheap folding umbrella at the corner. She chose a lurid floral pattern, to buoy up her mood. Then she crossed to the east side of the street and got on line for the Chemical Bank machine. Because it was supposed to be spring she had worn openwork shoes and now her feet were soaked. The socks were only helping keep the water in. She'd have a hot bath when she got home, that and a lot of red wine and aspirin and a lot of TV. It was completely dark now and the inside of the coffee shop was lit up like a diorama. She could hear the bank machine beeping softly as she shuffled forward in line.

In the coffee shop the waiter was bringing Sinclair a check and he was standing up and putting money down on the table. Gwen watched him sling his jacket over his shoulder and walk toward the double glass doors. When he got outside he paused and looked in her direction, but Gwen did not think he could see her; it was too dark and she would never have owned such a tacky umbrella and he knew she had no account at Chemical Bank. Sinclair shrugged into his jacket and walked a couple of doors down to the narrow front of the Muse Tavern. He would stay there for a long time probably, getting very drunk on beer and whiskey. In the morning he would punish himself for the excess by working out twice as long and hard on whichever martial art it was that he and Weber practiced. Somehow it was cheering to Gwen to be able to predict all that with reasonable confidence. She stepped out of the bank line, pointed the umbrella into the wind, and walked toward Seventh Avenue. The wind swept around in the other direction and the umbrella swelled, pulling her along after it like a sail.

Not having a boyfriend anymore was not a good enough excuse to take a cab, Gwen advised herself, snapping the garish umbrella shut as she went down the steps to the IRT. A slimy puddle had formed on the landing and she skipped over it, starting to run toward the sound of a train moving in the station. But it was a downtown train, and she slowed down at the turnstile. *Walk, don't run.* It was silly but true that having Sinclair had made it a little easier to take the subway whether he was with her or not.

Something she had to start getting used to, wasn't it? This early in the evening the uptown platform was unthreatening enough, not crowded but speckled with reassuring Upper West Side types. Gwen waited near a woman more or less her own age who wore a zebra-striped coat and carried a pink Reminiscence shopping bag, shifting from foot to foot in her squelching shoes.

It took the uptown express only a couple of minutes to come in. There were plenty of people in Gwen's car. She cased them quickly and leaned back, not quite closing her eyes but slitting them. Four years before she'd been snatched into a subway bathroom by a man she could only describe later as big and white, who'd slapped her, thrown her against the wall, and then inexplicably bolted without doing anything else, no rape or robbery. He'd cracked two of her ribs and left her with a deep-seated horror of the subway, and yet to urge herself against that feeling, Gwen had discovered, seemed to reduce her vaguer fears of other, less formed things. She eyed the other passengers through her lashes, with some odd sense of secret power, as the train rushed in and out of its stations.

At the newsstand outside the 72nd Street stop she paused and bought some papers very quickly without looking at them: the *Post*, the *Voice*, *People* magazine. Bathtub reading. The rain had slowed to a sprinkle and she did not need to unfurl the umbrella for the short walk to West End Avenue. One block over and two up, and she had opened the heavy wooden door to her building and was climbing the carpeted stairs.

Key in the door, she froze. *Like a rabbit in headlights*, she thought, hating herself as much as the syndrome. It was the most she could do to turn herself around so that at least she would see if anyone else came up the stairwell. Her key ring pressed a node in the small of her back, from which the paralysis radiated. If she went in now she would sink instantly into a chair, onto the floor maybe, and she might stay there motionless for hours, with no power to

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run a bath or take off her shoes or make any of the gestures of living.

It wouldn't do. There was no use to go into the apartment like that, but it wasn't good to be nailed to the hallway either; at least inside it was comparatively safe. *Oh, this is absurd*, Gwen thought, hating it all wildly, and then recalled the last thing Sinclair had said: Don't let the bastards get you down. The panic withdrew a little, not leaving her altogether but remaining present without touching her, like the walls of a box, or a room. Ever so slightly she began to relax. It was something to have been loved after all, even unsuccessfully.

All she really needed was a plan. Nothing required her to stay in the apartment, did it? Her weekend bag was completely packed and waiting by the door, ready for the morning departure. *Why not tonight, then? No reason*, Gwen thought, beginning to hope. She could picture the trustworthy canvas grip, its rolled leather handles, placed solidly just within the room. All she would have to do was (1) pick up the bag, (2) call the garage, (3) leave. She faced her door, only a little tremulous now, and turned the key.

Now the rain had completely stopped. Gwen rode a wave of exhilaration up the Henry Hudson Parkway, speeding just a little. How easy it could be to take control of one's life after all! It had been less than a year since she had first learned to drive, when for so long she had thought that she never would. Now she went a little faster, weaving among the other cars, at ease, lifting her eyes every so often to look over at the dark silky sheen of the river, with city lights glittering, suspended down inside it.

She accelerated through the ramp to the bridge, savoring the twist and pull of the turn. At the bridge entrance the traffic thickened and she had to slow down. Gwen shut her eyes a moment against the chain of taillights climbing ahead and opened them again. The inside of the car glowed with confident, practical signal lights, registering everything in running order. From the rearview mirror there hung a little swing on which two plastic lovebirds perched, beak to beak. That was Marian's touch, Marian with her flair for transforming the tacky into something slightly transcendent; she was also responsible for the laminated portrait of Saint Dymphna, glued up under the green glow of the dashboard. And of course the whole car had belonged to Marian too before she—

Well, I just might get rid of all that stuff, Gwen thought, shifting lanes as the cars spread out on the bridge. But really, she didn't need to do that now. The recurring shock of recognizing them had faded, day by day and month by month, turning finally into something else. Remembering Marian was no longer so sharply painful as it had once been. In spite of the fact that Gwen had lost whatever faith she'd been trained to and believed in no god and no afterlife, Marian's disappearance from the world had come to feel more like a separation than an absolute loss. The talismans had lost their power to wound and become a kind of comfort, and memory now was bearable, necessary even. Gwen turned north on the Saw Mill River Parkway, picking up speed; there was quite a long way ahead yet.

Darkness sealed her tightly into the car. The Taconic was pretty driving in daylight but by night it was no more interesting than anything else. When Gwen felt her eyes begin to lock too steadily on the roadway ahead she put out her hand and touched the scanner button on the radio. A station played for twenty seconds, then the next and then the next. It was an irritating gadget, really, more of a nuisance than a help. Nothing on the whole band appealed to Gwen enough for her to stay with it, and when the scanner had run two complete cycles she reached down and turned the radio off.

With this you can forget about decisions, Marian had once said, it fails to make decisions *for* you. Fully automatic . . . Gwen smiled in the dark. It was odd that when the call had come her first reaction had been to seek her earliest memory of Marian. It was hard to distinguish what she'd been told from what she actually remembered, but what finally had come to her was a sharp sensory apparition from parochial school: smell of chalk and dry paper, scratching of fat-barreled pencils, the look of her own shiny black shoes, which fastened securely across the instep with a little strap. Two desks ahead of her and across the aisle Marian leaned out to lift, delicately and inch by inch, the veil of Sister Mary Consuela, who had stopped stock still in one of the reveries she sometimes fell into, on her way from the rear of the room to the front.

Sister Mary Consuela . . . that would make it first grade. There was a current of muffled tittering circling the room, but Marian never smirked, being too expressionlessly concentrated on her task. Gwen, ever a goody-two-shoes, was frightened, but acutely interested too, watching the slow rise of the veil. Surely something terrible would be revealed, and what emerged was yard after yard of sister's flat black habit, enveloping as night. Gwen blinked and pulled the car back to the crown of the road; it had been drifting toward the shoulder. Perhaps it had been terrible enough after all: black on black on black . . . When the old nun finally felt something and turned around Marian had already vanished into her polite posture at the desk, feet set primly together on her chair rung, demurely masked. Devilish as she could sometimes be she never exposed herself for nothing, never gave up anything for free.

If not the first memory, that was the first datable one, but in fact they'd known each other much longer than that, had even known each other in the womb. A family joke. It had always charmed Gwen to imagine her mother and her aunt, neither long out of high school, both newly married and hugely pregnant, only a couple or three weeks apart, as it turned out. They'd been inseparable, so the story went, shopping as long as their legs would carry them, escorting each other to the baseball games they both adored, eating absurd, overwhelming meals. And so she and Marian, unnamed and half formed, would have been inseparable too, ipso facto, floating in their adjacent orbs of amniotic fluid. Marian, who'd almost always be the leader, had been born first and easily, while Gwen, as she was later told, hadn't seemed to want to leave at all.

Liked it better where I was, no doubt, Gwen said to herself, mouthing the words. The high beams of a speed-

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ing car came up quickly behind her and passed by on the left. Never since had she been quite so at home in the world, not like she always imagined her mother, her aunt, to have been. In the pictures they both looked so young, and in fact Gwen's mother had been only nineteen. Ten years younger than she herself was now, Gwen recognized with a physical wriggle as if she'd been pricked. It had been surprisingly sharp of Sinclair to discover how badly she'd begun to want a child, and kind of him to have snatched the words out of his own mouth . . . A bell-shaped hollow opened inside her, rang once and disappeared. She'd done the right thing. For now.

Of course her mother and her aunt had probably both married blind: two brothers bent on doubling and redoubling their money and who'd succeeded very well at that, almost beyond dreams of avarice. They'd moved their wives and children out of central Chicago and slowly across the subdivisions and at last to the big houses in Winnetka, from which there was nowhere left to go. That enormous house with its endless, bland appointments . . . her mother had ended up so enwombed in affluence that it was not necessary for her even to dress most mornings, and some days she did not. Yet Gwen didn't think she was unhappy. It never had been heartless luxury, not for anyone involved in it. She and Marian had been well and truly cared for, prized and treasured through and through. But Marian had slit the silken tent to slip out into a harder world, and Gwen, more shyly and with more painful hesitation, had finally followed her through the rent.

It remained a mystery to her, exactly why she'd had to go, but mysterious or not it was absolutely so. Childhood's world turned out to be a backward lobster trap; instead of its exit it concealed its entrance. But inside or outside, Gwen's place had always been nowhere. An outsider would find it hard to understand how so much generosity and love could be so overwhelmingly difficult to survive; it was a ridiculous proposition—but Marian had not survived it. Proof positive. Darkness visible . . . Gwen glanced up from the center line of the highway and briefly met her own eyes, ghostly in the rearview mirror. The last memory followed with illogical ease upon the first, Marian's last surprise in a career of surprising the people who knew her best. Gwen had never, ever thought it would be Marian; she'd always expected, and at times found a kind of solace in the belief, that it would be herself.

Where the Taconic ended Gwen did a short hitch on I-90 and exited onto a northbound secondary. She'd been on the road more than two hours, and it wasn't much farther now, she knew. Things seemed a little unfamiliar in the dark, but she couldn't find the slip of paper with the list of turns, so there was nothing to do but trust herself. Autopilot. At a crossroads she went left on a potholed unlined pavement and drove for a mile, a mile and a half. A graveled drive appeared in the pool of her headlights, and she turned in, feeling the car grind and slip a little on the hill.

The white clapboard house stood halfway up the slope, just ahead of the ridged shadow of the tree line, its dark windows reflecting the headlights back at her. She drove around and parked at the side of the house and carried her bag up the steps to the back porch. No need to lock the car, not here. When she stopped outside the kitchen door she noticed for the first time the soft curtain of sound the tree frogs made. The key was where it was supposed to be, under a bleached white conch shell on the windowsill.

She was the first one up this season, and inside the air was thick and unusual. Gwen groped along the kitchen wall for a moment before she remembered that the light turned on with a pull chain. She circled toward the center of the room, stumbled over something, hit the edge of the table with her hip, and found the cord.

The kitchen was in some disorder, as the rest of the place would probably be too. It always seemed to happen when the house was closed, despite all manner of good intentions on the part of everyone. An array of last year's pots and pans was spread over the gas stove, the sink, and the round central table. Gwen saw that they at least were clean, if a bit dusty, and had only not been put away. A box of kindling by the big wood-burning range had been overturned, possibly by someone's dog, in the wake of a hasty departure. The broken wheeled horse and the tin wagon, one of which she'd probably tripped over in the dark, belonged to Vincent, Annie's four-year-old. Annie would have shoved them into the house along with the rest of Vinny's smaller "summer toys" now scattered across the plain planking, not really knowing where they landed, her mind engaged with some other project, like containing Vinny in the car. Sweet natured but a bit scrambled, that was Annie, but Gwen liked her, found even her vagueness appealing enough. She and Vinny would turn up tomorrow afternoon, though Henry, husband and father, was off on some travel-writing junket and wouldn't be coming with them. Carolyn was coming up, so was Weber, and possibly Tom Larkin. They'd all planned to converge on the house for the first spring weekend sometime on Saturday, but Gwen had beaten them all to it, now.

And beaten them to the mess as well, she thought. Squaring away the wood and the toys would take only a minute, but the range had been belching cold ashes, those dishes had to be rinsed, everything was thick with a winter's worth of dust, the floor needed a mopping, a scrubbing even . . . But not tonight, Gwen decided, suddenly exhausted, the late drive hitting her full in the face; it would all keep till tomorrow, and she might get enough communal points by giving it just a lick and a promise and making the first major run to the store. She locked the door and put the key in her pocket, since she was there alone. The house creaked gently as she moved across the floor to get her bag. She wouldn't even look at the other rooms, not until tomorrow, she told herself as she walked down the shaft of light thrown from the kitchen doorway to the stairs.

Her bedroom was a small one, just wide enough to fit the bed and a small night table beside it, securely close. The air was stale but it cleared quickly once Gwen knocked loose and opened the little sash window that overlooked the road. She made the bed with sheets from

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the hall closet, then pulled her nightgown out of the bag and undressed quickly in front of the warped mirror tacked to the inside of the door. It was a nice little body, she concluded, irresistibly giving it a cursory inspection, still firm and resilient enough. Her own. The face above it was unconfident, the sad dislocated face of a lost child. Gwen turned her back on it and dove into her nightgown.

Red flannel furled around her from neck to ankles: instant warmth. She tipped across the cold hall floor to the bathroom and hastily washed her face and brushed her teeth. Then she came back and crawled into the bed, wriggling her shoulders against the mattress, anticipating sleep, and turned off the light. The lamp's bulb faded in a succession of sulphurous auras and Gwen snapped wide awake, all of her unease and panic instantly returning. The tree frogs outside went *scritch-scratch* like nails on a chalkboard. It was too much, after she'd really tried to beat it, driven so far to get it all out of her system. What the hell was the matter with her anyway? Annoyance was better than fear and nausea, at any rate. She switched the lamp back on and reached down for the papers she'd bought earlier, shoved into the side pocket of her bag there half under the bed.

Ritual reading of the *Post* had cured her insomnia a few times before. She began with the funny page, then Dear Abby, then the Rigby cartoon. Toward the end of the gossip items on page six she began to feel that reassuring sense of boredom spreading over her like an old blanket, and her eyelids started to droop again. Drowsily she turned the page and there on page eight was a quarter-column picture of Weber in handcuffs, captioned: "Mystery bridge climber didn't mean to jump?"

The story was short and Gwen skimmed it: ". . . Police cajoled . . . said he had no plan to harm self or anyone . . . found to carry no I.D. . . . could be charged with trespass and/or reckless endangerment . . . psychiatric observation . . ." There went Weber's weekend. Was it really him? Yes, no doubt about it. It was his disjointed, half-amused expression that had first caught her eye, a face he might have worn up here, for instance, walking across the field from the creek. Weber looked reflective, rather pleased with himself, and utterly unaware of his surroundings: the stanchions of the bridge, a slice of river, handcuffs, the two policemen flanking him, expressionless as the ones who—

Gwen glanced at the date at the top of the page, slapped the paper down on the covers and jumped out of bed. Who would have thought that a subconscious calendar could be quite so accurate? But sure enough, it was the very day. So that was what had been plaguing her ever since she woke that morning; it was a relief, even a sort of thrill to know. Typical of Weber, whose obsessions always drove right to the surface, to commemorate the first anniversary with some such grandiosely stupid gesture. Gwen stared at the crumpled newspaper on the bed, almost expecting it to move, to levitate. It wasn't panic now, just her mind rushing too furiously forward toward comprehension. She picked up the house key from the dresser and went downstairs, clasping the key in the shallow pocket of her gown.

It had been in her mind to go for a walk, but she was barefoot and it was silly to go wandering around the countryside in nothing but a nightgown. She stopped on the porch and stood with her back to the dirty kitchen. There was a pricking around her eyes, her body wanting to cry, but she had already cried enough on that subject, though of course the mourning, in one form or another, would go on forever. *Well, I do miss you, there's no bones about that*, she thought, knowing that she could not be heard but feeling somehow as if she were. A wave of fatigue swept her forward and she caught herself on the porch rail.

A lean cold moon had risen, shining down over the valley. The surface of the paved road gleamed like a river. Gwen's mind turned itself inside out and she remembered the job of cleaning out Marian's apartment—weeks it had taken. No one had seen her for quite a long time; everyone thought that someone else was seeing her, but she'd assiduously quarreled with them all. The chaos was not frightening in the end, simply amazing, a side effect of a mind that had absolutely stopped caring where it was, if it even knew. Everything had to be examined, for salvage, for value, for some further clue to what had happened, and there were plenty of clues, of course, all leading in different directions. One had struck Gwen hard enough that she'd slipped it into her pocket, a folded business card from some art supply store, and printed on the back in Marian's tiniest, most neurotic writing, a line from Camus: *"Le ver se trouve au coeur de l'homme. C'est là qu'il faut le chercher."*

Gwen squeezed the porch rail, keeping her grip. *Oh, it is there we must look for it, indeed.* She had kept the card for a month or so and then one night, in the clutch of some mood, she had burned it. But of course that made no real differences. One doesn't exorcise the worm so easily as that, not from a heart that will nurture it. Gwen shivered inside her red flannel; the nights up here were still cold. She pushed herself back off the bannister and stood up straight.

On the opposite hill the treetops made a crisp black line, dividing the curve of the land from the sky where the moon drifted. Gwen put her hand on a square post of the porch, not for support but only to feel of it. It was gone, she understood, the worm that had worked at her own entrails for so long. Maybe she had only imagined that it was ever there at all. It must be a rare thing for anyone to really want to die. She'd never know if it had come about for Marian by completion of her will or by some perverse combination of a half wish and chance. The sure thing was that if Marian had not died, she would never have had to learn how to drive that car. At some level it, or what she could make of it, was as stupid and as simple as that. She had never expected to be the stronger one, had not wanted to be, but she was. Now she could feel that terrifying strength running all through her; it would never abandon her, and she would not be able to discard it either, all of the days of her life. Comfort or curse, it was hers for always. She would live for a long time, probably, but now she knew she would not sleep, not tonight, and so she went into the house and found a broom and began to sweep the kitchen floor. □

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DEBORAH GALYAN

Kerouac

I can tell you have been reading Kerouac again by the way you describe the Reynolds Wrap bum to your mother. "Real gone," you say to her, "truly righteous." You are sitting very close to her in the front seat of the Chrysler, your arm around her. She shakes her brunette page boy free of your embrace and refuses to look when you remove your shoe and demonstrate how his feet were wrapped up tight like baked potatoes at a Sunday cookout.

"Stop it, John," she says, and you do.

The last house your father built is visible when we crest the hill, a large New England salt box, landlocked and ill at ease in a suburb of ranch styles. When we turn into the drive, she says, "Welcome home." You say "Thanks," although you never lived here.

Your mother has placed electric candles in the windows and screwed blue bulbs into all the sockets. When you twist around to pinch Nate's cheek, your face glows in the slow, flat light.

"Look there, Nate," you say, pointing at the house, but Nate can't take his eyes off you. He's blinking hard, not sure who you are.

"Ho, ho, ho," you shout, in your preposterous Santa voice.

Nate begins to cry.

Inside, your mother takes off her cashmere coat. Her hands tremble. I feel pathetic in her big white house with my tattered backpack and sober-faced child. We wouldn't be here, except for Nate. She feels she ought to love him, and you wish she would. He is growing into that stage in which young children resemble very old men. He is squat and blond, and graceless, as your father was before he got sick. Nate has his eyes.

Now she takes Nate from your arms and sits him on the kitchen counter. She is wiping chocolate off his face, rubbing hard with a dry paper towel. She is angry because she had to get into your father's Chrysler and drive forty miles to the Indianapolis bus station to get us, because we don't have enough money to keep our junk car running, because we live in the country like hicks and keep big dogs that run around loose and bark all night. She is angry because your hair is long, even though you braid it and tuck it neatly down inside the collar of your shirt. My hair is short and unbecoming, like a Marine's. It's easier. I swim a lot.

She has been angry for the last ten years because you never finished any of the degrees you started, for the last five because you abandoned the only good job you ever had to become a sculptor. She won't say the word "sculptor." You are a sculptor without concern for delicacy. You prefer metal, things with edges, the entrails of broken machines. The barn behind our rented house is filled with faceless primitives. There are other reasons.

Lately, she is angry because we have added Nate to our tawdry agenda, when we cannot even keep his face clean, when we cannot keep our junk car running, and so must stand in the Indianapolis bus station with the Reynolds Wrap bum and a black woman who slips Nate a candy bar we don't want him to have. We wait until she pulls up in your dead father's Chrysler. She saves her anger for us the same way my mother saves fifty dollar bills for my sister and me, keeps them crisp and tucked back until Christmas, when she slips them to us. We pretend not to expect it, but we always do.

You and I stand by helplessly while she rubs our son's face red, letting her wipe us off, too, with silence. Nate lets her wash one hand, but not the other. He keeps it balled up tightly and whines when she tries to pry open his fingers. When I step forward, she drops his hand and steps back, saying, "Momma knows best, doesn't she?" She is out of the room before I can speak. We listen to her heels snap on the hardwood stairs. You're holding the shoe you took off in the car and never put back on. Nate's nose is running. He relaxes his fist and thrusts a wad of paper toward you.

"Say it," he says. He wants you to read it to him.

You put the shoe on your mother's marble countertop,

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unfold the moist remains of a candy wrapper, and read it to him several times.

"Butterfinger," you say. "Butterfinger, Butterfinger, Butterfinger."

In the morning, you make French toast from raisin bread, but she won't have any. She sits with us in the breakfast booth, smoking and feeding neat triangles to Nate. Nate loves French toast, but distrusts the raisins: he pushes them back at her with his tongue. I am wondering why she doesn't pick them out first when a raisin he has spit out rolls off the table and onto the apricot upholstery between his legs. She doesn't see it right away, and I can't quite reach it before Nate rubs it into the pale brocade with the heel of his hand. When she notices, a thin crescent of color appears on each of her cheeks. Nate looks at her apologetically and says, "All gone." She says, "Not entirely, sweetheart."

In the afternoon, she wants to shop. She tosses you the keys. "You drive," she says, and climbs into the back with Nate.

Inside the mall, we split up and wander down separate corridors. I feel dingy and thick in my Mexican sweater and faded jeans, skulking along between clutches of young girls in stiff jeans and Popsicle-colored jackets. We've celebrated Christmas already, at home with Nate, so I wander without purpose, past couples dressed in clothes that seem as crisp and fresh as the ones on the racks. I'm conscious of my Wallabies where the suede has gone shiny at the toes. Up ahead, the entrance to Santa's Castle shimmers. Nate doesn't believe in Santa the way kids usually do, because you don't want him to feel bad when he finds out the truth. You found out early from a boy at school and spent years pretending to believe, saving your parents the disappointment. Nate gets a kick out of Santa anyway, calls him "Christmas Guy," and I suspect you've taken him into the castle. I walk by, hoping to spot the two of you in line, but I pass too close and a teenage elf in Danskins presses a candy cane into my palm. When I say "No, thanks" and refuse to close my fingers around it, her mouth falls open and she says, "Be that way."

I spend another half hour looking for you in likely places: the record store, the Orange Julius, a video arcade with attendants dressed like pirates. When I turn around and look down the long concourse, I see your mother standing alone in the center of the floor, her packages dangling at her side. She is watching something, but I can't tell what until I sneak up within a few yards and align myself directly behind her. She is watching you.

You and Nate have found something familiar that reminds you of the dinghy we keep on our small green pond: a rowing machine. I watch you on the display platform of the sporting goods store, rowing in some undeclared race for some mysterious prize, your son sitting high on your shoulders, frowning like a Viking warrior.

I watch her watching you. I can tell she is smiling, by the crinkles on the side of her face. You have pleased her and you don't even know it.

When your smile disappears, I look up and see the store clerk walking slowly toward you, his hands folded behind his back. You are wearing an old crushed fedora, which Nate has accidentally pushed down over your eyes. He stands over you a moment, then hitches up his grey dress pants and squats down next to you. First you pretend not to notice as he crouches uncomfortably at your side, then you tip your hat, smile, and go on rowing. Your braid has slipped out from under the brim. It sways freely as you move back and forth. When he taps you on the shoulder and points to the exit, you go quietly. You walk with dignity to the center of the store, the clerk following, "escorting" you to the exit. At the threshold, you turn suddenly and salute him. Nate, thinking it's a game, reaches down from his perch and pats the startled clerk's cheek before you whirl around and walk out. I stay just long enough to see your grin dissolve when you see your mother, then I step into an artery of shoppers and hurry off before you see me too.

Twenty minutes later I find you sitting on a bench. Nate's asleep with his head on your thigh. One of his hands has slipped through a slat; both shoes have come untied. You are reading a tattered paperback, a yellowed copy of a Kerouac novel.

"Been here long?" I ask.

You nod yes. "Listen to this."

"Is there a certain and definite teaching to be given to all living creatures? was the question probably asked to beetlebrowed snowy Dipankara . . ." A large man on the bench across from us stares. You look up to see if I am listening before you conclude.

". . . his answer was the roaring silence of the Diamond!"

"So?" I say.

"So," you say, "I don't know," and stroke the nape of Nate's neck. You do this every year: read Kerouac at Christmas. You've done it ever since your junior year in college, when you went home for Christmas break to your parents' brand new house, and went out for a beer with your high school friends, and came home late and found your mother smearing varnish on the rough-hewn fireplace mantel your father had made himself and set into place. You said, "What in the hell are you doing?" She had nearly finished the job. She said, "I'm correcting one of your father's mistakes." Upstairs, you found him in the room where you slept, sitting on the bed in a gnarl of dirty clothes and books, reading your copy of Kerouac. You said, "What are you doing, Dad?" He said, "Nothing," and went on reading. Downstairs, your mother had begun to yell his name. "Everything's gone," he said, "already come and gone."

You didn't know if he was quoting or talking until you read the book again. Now you're snagged on it. You read Kerouac in the bus station, in the shopping mall, at your mother's breakfast table, as if by reading him in her presence you could transfer some of his wisdom and mercy to her. You don't dare read it aloud; some of the words, like "visionary" and "angelic," are dirty out of church. I want to tell you to stay out of her way, to leave her alone before she really hurts you, but she's heading toward us, wobbling a bit from the burden of her merchandise. There's something sticking out of her mouth: a cane from Santa's castle.

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By eleven on Christmas morning you have already had the argument. It begins when you show her a few Polaroids of your newest piece of sculpture and ends when you storm into the kitchen. In between, she is scrupulously silent until you snatch the photographs away and say, "Forget it." She says, "Oh, John, I was just trying to imagine who would buy something like that."

In the kitchen, where Nate and I are stirring up cranberry salad, I give you a loaded look: half compassion, half rebuke for allowing this to happen three years in a row. By noon, we sit like Victorians in your mother's formal living room as though nothing at all has happened. Your mother wears a dark red dress; she looks beautiful, almost young with her hair pulled into a bun. We smile at each other across a room of difficult, silly furniture while we open our gifts.

Nate goes first. You kneel beside him under your mother's slender tree. He rips off the wrapping, a fistful at a time. The size and shape of the box intrigue me. I guess: Lincoln Logs, building blocks, train. When the paper falls away, we all read: *American Heritage Encyclopaedia: Two Volume Family Edition*. You twist around and stare at your mother.

"Is this what it says it is?"

Your mother nods. "He'll need it."

You say, "Sure Mom, in about ten years."

"Some kids his age have computers," your mother answers. "How will he get to the library with your car broken all the time?"

You start to argue, then stop. "Lookie here, Nate," you say, "just what you wanted." Nate strains to open the box, which is stapled shut. You say, "Nate, say 'Thank you.' "

Nate wanders away.

"Well then," you say, "moving right along." You unwrap your presents, calling the name and color of each item: "tie maroon; slippers brown; dress shirt beige; dress shirt white; dress shirt blue." You put the lids back on everything and stack it all up beside you. Then you laugh and say, "Three dress shirts. Thank you, Mother. Thankyou, thankyou, thankyou."

"Do me a favor," she says.

You nod.

"Don't wear them when you solder or weld, or whatever it is you do." Then she looks at me and says, "It's your turn."

When I unwrap my gift, you scoot close and put your hand on my thigh. Inside the box, underneath a puff of cotton, is a set of combs, inlaid with cloisonné. Surprised, I run my finger over their tortoise shell teeth. I reach up and touch my hair.

"Whoops," she says. "I'm so sorry. When I bought those I never dreamed you'd go so short." It's true, my hair never has been this short, but I've never worn it long enough for combs. You lean over the box and frown.

"Wow," you say, "they're beautiful," and hold one up to the light.

"They really are," I say, "Thank you." I think about it and add, "Thanks anyway."

Your mother leans forward and stares at my hair. "I'm sorry they won't work," she says. "Maybe you could let it grow out to a nicer length." I stare back, speechless.

"Maybe they're really for me," you say, sticking one in your hair the wrong way. It looks like a tiara. You twirl your braid and grin. "How do you like it, Mom?"

She ignores you, and picks at Nate instead. He is toddling around restlessly, getting his fingerprints on the federal-blue wainscoting.

"Come here, Nate," she says with an edge to her voice. "Sit down like a good boy." Nate shakes his head "no," but socks a finger in his mouth and begins to suck nervously.

Your mother keeps a cigarette burning in a little porcelain ashtray while she opens her gifts. She makes an incision with her fingernail at the corner of each package, then tears the paper in long curling strips.

"How lovely," she says after each gift is opened: a cameo pin you traded for at an art fair last summer, a pair of gloves to match her coat, a picture of Nate, nicely framed. "How nice." When it is over, she drags hard on her cigarette and looks away, out the window. I watch for some sign of adjournment.

Then you say, "You forgot one, Mom," and bring her a plain brown sack you have been hiding under the sofa.

"Well, what's this?" she asks. "A surprise." She touches the bag uncertainly, as though it isn't clean. We all wait while she lights another cigarette; then she puts her hand into the bag and pulls out something black. It's a crew neck t-shirt, probably a man's medium. It looks ridiculous when she holds it up. I think, what now? When she turns it around, I see a paragraph or more, a virtual thesis in iron-on letters. Certain words jump at me: wisdom, fuck, poverty, God. Unmistakably Kerouac. I give you an astonished glare, but you won't look back.

Her smile is small and mean. She says, "Did you really think I would like this?" She balls the shirt up and stuffs it into the bag.

"No," you say, "I didn't." You are taut on the sofa's edge, looking at your palms. When you get up, I grab at your hand, afraid you'll walk out. Instead, you walk over and stand right next to her. She draws back a bit to avoid touching you. You say, "I wanted you to have it, Mom, the same way you wanted me to have all those shirts."

She puts her cigarette out calmly. Then she says, "Why not just give me a filthy rag?"

Here we go, I think. Now we've had it. Then I see something moving in the corner of the room. It's Nate, standing uncertainly on the boxed encyclopaedia, straining to reach a shimmering glass ornament suspended from a branch. When I lunge for him, the ornament is already on its way.

I catch Nate in time to keep him from falling on a sliver. There's the tarnished sound of breaking glass, Nate's first screams, and then it begins.

"Can't you watch your own child?"

"Shut up, Mom."

"That ornament belonged to your grandmother."

"He's just a kid, Mom. Should we lock him in the closet?"

I heave Nate up the stairs and lay him on the bed. I rub his stomach until his sobs break and from up here I

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can hear you shouting in the living room. You sound like your father. You're saying what he used to say, against her constant railing. You say, "Fuck you, Charlotte. This time I'm really leaving."

For a while I don't hear anything except Nate's quick breath against the clock's pulse. Then you climb the stairs and find us on the unmade bed and drag our only suitcase from the closet. I watch you wedge our dirty clothes into the bag and pull the zipper closed until it catches on a small white sock. You leave it that way.

In the bathroom where I gather up our toothbrushes and soap, I find you've left water standing in the tub, Nate's rubber Cookie Monster washed up on one ledge, Kerouac on the other. The glue has dried to a crystalline crust, and the pages crack, threatening to come loose from the spine. I open it to a dog-eared page and read a sentence you've underlined, once in pencil, once in ink:

And as it is Christmas, I added, "Lord bless you all and merry tender Christmas on all your roof tops and I hope angels squat there the night of the big rich real star, amen."

We creep down the stairs with our bag and walk through the quiet rooms. I peek into the dining room where the good white plates and silver candelabra have been in place for hours. The kitchen is empty; the turkey sits bronzed and sweating on the countertop.

Outside it's getting dark, and she's sitting in the Chrysler with her hands on the wheel. I start toward her, Nate heavy in my arms, but you catch the sleeve of my jacket and pull me back. "No," you say. You take Nate gently in your free arm and hold out the small suitcase to me. "Trust me," you say, and touch your finger to my lips. Then you turn and start down the driveway. I watch you walk into the dark with our son slung over your shoulder for nearly a minute before I begin to run toward you. At your side, breathless, I look at Nate, asleep in his bright blue snowsuit, and think about the forty miles to the bus station, the exit ramp, the rushing cars. We've never hitchhiked with him before. "Don't worry," you say.

She follows slowly, headlights off, through the winding streets. When she pulls up close you pick up the pace. "Don't look around," you say, "keep walking." You lead us through the streets past houses in utter darkness, past houses blinking like neon carnival arcades. In a dark stretch near the end of Bankers Drive, I feel your mother in the stealthy Chrysler, stalking us. She flashes the brights twice, flooding our escape with cold light, with her ferocious hunger and regret. For that instant only, you waver.

"For God's sake," you say, "Holy Christ," and start to turn around.

"No," I say. "No more." I put my arm around you and urge you gently forward.

When she turns the last corner of the subdivision and drives away, you squeeze my arm. We hike up the steep hill toward the freeway and pause to rest. It's dark now. Silent. Below us, the houses disappear. We see the bright squares of windows and the skeletons of roof tops strung with lights. "Bless you," you whisper, down into the valley. Nate's eyes open. You hold him up, so he can look once more before we walk onto the ramp. □

JAMES RAGAN

THE FALLING ACCIDENTAL

Always when I think of the other-born
and the accidental falling
twin from the world
hanging on a hinge
to delicious space, cool
as the icebox I spoon
for a dish of vanilla,

I feel the age of rain
each morning the body-brother
gone, trading air for his sleep,
awakens my mother's voice
in bed, craving breath.
It is always the same. Everywhere
the odor of vinegar and stale madeleine,
everywhere the month's failed fluid
splits its sack and calmly

it is noon on Halloween and I know
the falling accidental
loss of memory
when the tongue dishing out a nut
cracks a tooth and the imaginary
axe falls, splitting
the whole breath of my lung.

Always when I think of the other-born,
the war world wanes
in its pity of the unified grave
outside Krakow, Lidice,
or the nunnery pits on Salvador's road.
Old grief passes
as if on All Saint's Day we cohabit
the same anguished comprehension,
as if by instinct the limbs
memorize their body's
history of loss. Always when I think

of the other-born, I eat
ice cream, and the accidental
falling child come-apart
remembers how the nerve buzzed first
from the rind to the core, how
in the age of separation
the terror seeps through,
cold and god-lost, cracking
the last significant bone
in our generation's thought.

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CAROLE MURRAY

In the Year of the Mouse

Every night we drink. Rum and Pepsi, hot buttered rum, rum and orange juice. When I walk in the door after work I find him on the couch reading the paper, or waking up, rubbing his hand over his eyes. I rush into the kitchen and pull out the ice tray and two tall glasses.

"Did you find anything today?" I ask.

"Yes. I sent out four resumés."

"Pepsi or orange juice?"

"Pepsi. Is it cold outside?"

"Freezing."

We sit on chairs facing each other. Muzak drones from the radio. The room is hot as a sauna. Steam pipes hiss and rattle. Gusts of hot air disturb the dust on the end table, push little balls of debris across the wooden floor. Carlos pushes his black hair back from his forehead, all except the one lock that makes him look like a baby bull. Behind him, our window frames a scene right out of a Christmas card: tree boughs dusted with snow. Church bells chime seven, each peal crisp and clear, like a warning. I pull off my boots.

"What should we have for dinner?" I sound like a parody of a perfect housewife.

"Meatloaf. And rice and beans."

"Won't that take a long time?"

"No. I already made the rice and beans."

We walk into the tiny kitchen, trying to stay out of each other's way. I pound beef into a bowl, add onions, two eggs. I turn on the faucet and run warm water over slices of white bread, then knead everything into a mass. Carlos refills the glasses.

"The phone bill came today. You owe twelve dollars." His tone has the formality of an investment broker.

"I'll write you a check."

His body brushes mine as he leaves the room. He recoils from me as if I were a live wire. I stand by the refrigerator longer than I have to. If I am in the same room with him I'll have to say something. I put an ice cube between my teeth and bite hard.

We started out as friends, meeting in East Side bars for endless rounds of Irish Coffee. I was twenty-five and still living at home. I was in love with the brownness of his eyes. He reminded me of a great Indian Father wearing a feather cape, holding the hearts of the wounded under his warm wings. I was infatuated with the sight of his wrists, so dark and vulnerable. I had just had my second abortion.

The way Carlos phrased it was that he "wanted a wife for the holidays." I told him he was crazy, that you can't mail order a bride then throw her away on January first. He said, no, no, you don't understand, I'm a very sentimental person. We were on our fourth round of Manhattans.

He lived in Brooklyn Heights, a neighborhood so cheery the streets are named Pineapple, Cranberry, Lover's Lane. It is a good community, virtually crimeless. People decorate their brownstones for the holidays, leave their windows uncurtained so strangers can enjoy their tasteful flats. Real estate hypes it as an ideal place for "young marrieds."

"Why don't you move in with me?" he asked gently, with more politeness than passion.

My mind reeled—the liquor, the shock of someone who had done nothing more than kiss me paternally inviting me to set up house.

"When?" I inquired.

December 29th, the Feast of the Holy Innocents. Carlos finds this date auspicious and appropriate. My girlfriend drives me to his place and I climb the stairs hauling cartons of albums, books, occasional winter clothes. He is waiting for me at the top of the stairs waving a bottle of Moet et Chandon. He flashes me a very white smile.

That evening we go to a Mexican restaurant for our symbolic wedding dinner. He orders a salad of baby cactus. Watching Carlos eat a common houseplant described as "baby" disturbs me.

Later that night he wears pajamas. His mouth smells of Colgate. He kisses me hard, like he's trying to be inspired, then turns his back and sleeps.

In the morning we act like nothing is wrong.

Each day at lunchtime I go to the lingerie section of a department store and stare at the negligées. I wonder what color would appeal to him most. Pink and blue run the risk of seeming juvenile. Black is trite. Red is traditionally whorish. I wonder if dropping ten pounds would do the trick. I can think of nothing that would make me irresistible.

Each night we sleep together like siblings. We are roommates who clean the apartment each Saturday, who clown around in the supermarket. Once he said to me, "Do you know why I love you?" My heart started beating so fast it hurt. "Because you're totally crazy," he grinned.

Every Sunday we travel to the South Bronx to visit his family. I wouldn't cross a street to see my own relatives, so I'm vaguely amused that I don't complain about the 2-hour subway trip uptown. At his Grandmother's house all the English speaking cousins sit in the front room by the black and white TV and gossip in thick accents. The older generation crowds around the kitchen wagging their tongues in Spanish.

His mother and father, uncles and aunts are gracious to me to the point of embarrassment. They know so few words, even though they've been in New York for close to 30 years. "Eat, eat," they command me, filling my plate again and again. Once I caught Abuela pointing at me, then saying something that made the room explode with laughter.

I asked Carlos what she'd said. Finally I pried it out of him. She said I ate so little, I must be "naturally" fat.

"Maybe his libido is flagging because he's out of work,"

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my friend Rosie offered. She was the one person I could confide in. Her romantic history was even more bizarre than my own. Once she went home with a Romanian she met at a disco. There were two other men waiting in his apartment when they got there. He told her it was a Romanian custom for a man to share his woman with his friends. Rosie considered climbing out the bathroom window, but decided to tough it out. Later she admitted she enjoyed it. Rosie was homely, but she knew how to be desirable. I was desperate for her advice. She had been married briefly to a man she met through computer dating, and now that her divorce was final her lust for lust was at its height.

"He was never very amorous when he was working, either," I reminded her.

"I don't think he has another chick on the side. Maybe he has a mysterious war injury. Have you ever seen his equipment?"

I almost blushed.

"Well, it's not like you've never been with a man before, you know," she chided. "Do you love him?"

"I think I must." Why else would I stick around?

It's not like we aren't intimate. Walking through Prospect Park under an old gray sky our gloved fingers interweave, blue wool against black. On the subway we trade turns taking naps, my blonde head cradled on his shoulder. When we go dancing we're pretty steamy. It's only when we get home to that hothouse of an apartment that everything stops. Only a tiny kiddie kiss goodnight after setting the alarm.

Three months later we sit in a cafe on Montague Street. His hands make nervous patterns on the white linen tablecloth. He still hasn't touched me, no matter how many negligées I've bought, how many quarts of 151 proof rum I've purchased, how many aerobics classes I've sweated through.

"Look," Carlos says with difficulty, "I know I haven't been much of a 'husband' to you."

Without a second's hesitation I answer, "It's okay, you know, it's really okay." Anything to get that pained expression off his beautiful face.

One day I come home from work early with a stomach ache. As I search my purse for the door key I hear conversation and laughter coming from within. My hands sweat as I turn the key in the lock. The door swings open and I find Carlos standing naked in the middle of the room with a pretty teenage boy.

"Fuck," he mutters in disbelief as I turn and leave.

He calls me at Rosie's house and wants to know if I care to talk about it. I tell him no.

"Well I thought you knew I was a faggot," he apologizes, "I'm just sorry you had to see it."

I say nothing, hating my own stupidity, cursing the blindness of love.

"Look," he continues, "I thought I could be bi. I'm sorry."

*

Rosie urges me to break all his lightbulbs, to open every can in his house and dump it on the floor. She wants me to write obscenities on his wall with magic markers. She wants me to cut his vinyl couch with a switchblade, to pour water on his TV. The mere thought of this vandalism exhausts me, though I do steal a grey sweater of his that I was fond of.

If you give people enough rope, they'll hang themselves, Rosie tells me.

It wasn't rope, it was a pair of pajamas. He did it on his 30th birthday. He left a note for me and one for his parents. He stood on a chair wearing his flannel noose, then kicked free. He wasn't found for several days.

At the funeral his relatives eye me with reproach. The younger cousins, the English speaking ones, come up to me in groups as if I hold the key.

"Carlos told us you broke up with him because he wasn't ready to marry you. Is that true?"

"Yeah," I answer, "but we parted friends. Really."

His mother is led to me sobbing and incoherent. She takes me by the shoulders and babbles in a language of grief. "You kill my baby. You kill my boy."

A month later I get a call from a lawyer telling me I've been named executrix of Carlos' estate. I hate words that have x's in them. When I arrive at his office he hands me a manilla envelope holding the worldly goods of Carlos Hernandez: a sheaf of papers covered with his handwriting and a beaten gold band, something like a wedding ring.

When I get home I sit down with a bottle of Bacardi Dark and try to slow my breathing. It's a diary he's left me, started when he lost his job last year. In it he describes our meeting, how he found me a "good sport." He talks about the difficulty of living on unemployment and how relieved he was when I agreed to move in and split the rent. "A perfect find," he calls me, "neat, undemanding, and a fantastic cook!"

Pages are filled with details of his afternoon tricks and the guilt he felt afterwards. And then I notice a subtle change. My name pops up more and more on each page. He's noticing things about me. "Her hands are so beautiful. I long to kiss them." "While she sleeps I run my finger gently over her breast hoping to want something." Now he hates living a lie, he wants to tell me, but can't bear to hurt me. He thinks he can change, he thinks he can force desire to grow like a tulip bulb in December.

I have four fingers of rum left in the bottle and I spill a bit in my haste to turn the page. I want him to admit it. I want him to say he loved me more than anyone in his entire life. But he doesn't. The closest he comes is, "If I were to write a love letter, she would have to love me to know it were such."

On this hot starless night I go up to my roof with a bag of confetti. I have torn Carlos' words into a blizzard of paper and I take great pleasure casting it into the dark. In the distance I think I hear him laughing at me, saying, you don't understand—I'm a very sentimental person. And I laugh back, well so am I, as his gold band dangles from the chain around my neck. □

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Jailhouse Blues

SCOTT RUSSELL SANDERS

In July, when the weather inland was fit only for lizards, I drove with my family to Cape Cod and spent a week frolicking on that shifty hook of sand, chilling myself in the sea, sleeping nights in a shingled hut that used to be the Truro town jail. Neighbors still referred to our hut as The Jail, although it had long since been moved from the town into the woods, where it was enjoying a second career as yet another cottage for rent to ocean-hungry tourists. Coming from landlocked Indiana, we Sanders were about as hungry for ocean as any creatures without gills or webbed fingers could be.

We drove up to The Jail along parallel ruts in the sand, our muffler scraping ant-hills. Whitewashed inside and out, with the limbs of pitch pines and scrub oaks brushing against the eaves and waist-high grasses flourishing right up to the stoop, the cottage looked as though it had sprouted there in the woods, like a gleaming cubical mushroom. Truro must not have suffered much crime in the old days, to judge by the size of The Jail. One sheriff, a deputy, and four inmates would have filled the place. The original building was a two-story box, with a single ground-floor room scarcely big enough to swing the proverbial cat in, and a short-tailed cat at that. Here, as I imagine it, the sheriff and deputy played cards and kept glancing out the window, their eyes peeled for trouble. The upstairs was divided into a pair of cramped rooms with sloping ceilings, and here the prisoners must have agreed to stay. They could hardly have been *forced* to stay, for the casements around the windows showed no evidence of steel bars, and the flimsy doors and walls would have yielded to a casual fist. A wing had been tacked onto one side of the box, to accommodate a mossy bathroom and a galley kitchen, the latter so narrow that you could burn your tail on the stove while doing dishes in the sink. (I proved this by experiment.) There was not a plumb wall, level floor, or square joint in the whole rickety structure, which might have been cobbled together over a drunken weekend by a cross-eyed carpenter.

Our landlords had covered the largest gaps and holes with flattened cans, to discourage mice. They encouraged spiders, however, and asked that we leave the cobwebs in place, the better to snag mosquitoes and greenhead flies. There were quite evidently more flies and mosquitoes than the webs could handle. These landlords, a hearty couple nearly as old as the century, were longtime stalwarts of the Communist Party whose disillusionment with America stretched back into the 1930s. Skeptical about private property, they took their landlord status with several grains of irony. I had been taught in childhood to expect cloven hoofs and forked tails from communists, but could see no devilish deformities in this genial pair. On the day of our arrival they served us peppermint tea from cups of English bone china, and told us stories of real jails where they and their comrades had served time. (A curious phrase: to serve time. As though time itself were the turnkey, as though the proof of our liberty were the power to make time serve *us*.) Between our landlords' tales and the name of our cottage, even though I was footloose and free on vacation I could not get the dreary business of imprisonment out of my head.

This is merely one of my perversities, to brood on lack in the midst of plenty, to think of aging flesh while I bounce a baby in my arms, to imagine loneliness while I am laced in talk with friends, and to remember jails all during a week of utter freedom. It is a noxious trait, which causes my wife and children to grit their teeth. Knowing this, most of the time I keep my gloom under a bushel. But there it flickers, all the same, a candle of darkness.

In the miniature bedroom I shared with my son Jesse on the second floor of The Jail, the sloped ceiling kept me from standing upright, and when the trundle bed was pulled out, there was no floor left on which to stand at all. As I lay there at night, listening to Jesse's guiltless breath and to bobwhites wooing from nearby trees, I remembered sleeping in a refrigerator carton when I was a child. The cardboard box rested lengthwise in the mouth of the barn, end flaps left open for window and door, a bit of old carpet for mattress, a pillow and blanket for comfort, a flashlight for reassurance. Letting in sun and moon and stars, the box made a cozy nest for several nights. Then one morning I woke in utter blackness. I shoved against the end flaps, but they would not open. My last rational move was to switch on the flashlight, which promptly winked out when I used it to bang on the walls. Whereupon I went berserk. I became pure animal in a trap, kicking and yelling and flailing. I was an earthquake of fear. My ruckus kept me from hearing the amused grunts of the two neighbor boys who had stolen into the barn during the night and taped shut and barricaded my box. They had vamoosed by the time I battered my way out. I glared at my playhouse, which had become, with the closing of window and door, a prison.

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I emptied the box and stomped it flat and dragged it into the pasture and burned it. I did not stop shaking for an hour.

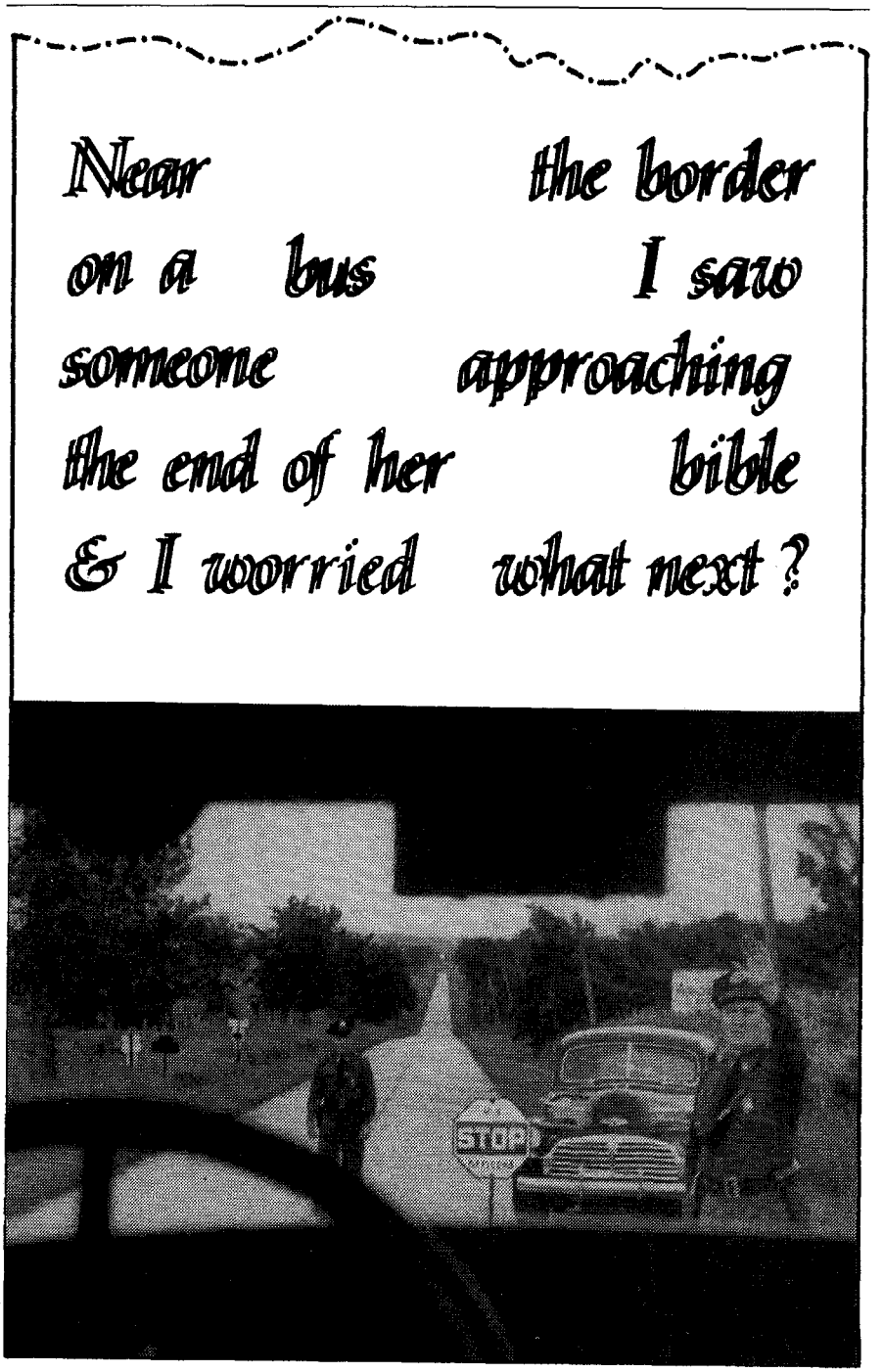
The mere recollection of that episode, as I lay upstairs in The Jail, with Jesse's breath and quail song filling the tiny room, was enough to keep sleep at bay. I remembered stories of kids who rubbed their parents the wrong way and got chained up in attics or basements, to age there and die like tethered dogs. I debated where I would rather be trapped—in an attic, which would be hot in summer, cold in winter, but dry at least, or in a basement, which would keep an even temperature the year round, but would also be damp and dark and snaky. The very names for jail musicked through my head. Hoosegow, calaboose, slammer, stir, poky, cooler, jug and clink. I remembered hearing about a slumlord in Los Angeles who, convicted of neglecting his properties, was sentenced to live for a month in one of his own tumble-down, rat-infested, cockroachy tenements. He was fitted with a beeper that would radio the police if he strayed more than fifty yards from the building. How would it feel, I wondered, to be caught in a web of electronics? I wondered also about those who imprison themselves. I thought of hermits, shut up in their unlit cells. I thought of Houdini, that virtuoso of confinement, who no sooner escaped than he was begging to be manacled again, wrapped in straitjackets, locked in cages, buried alive. In short, my candle of darkness burned with a long wick.

When I did finally drift off to sleep, afloat on my trundle bed, there was an edge of panic to my dreams. That first night I dreamed of a black bear slouching through the white cedar swamps of Cape Cod. My bear crawled into caves and hollow logs, where it stuck fast, or fell into pits, or tripped snares and went hurtling pawsfirst into the air, or bumbled into cleverly disguised cages. There was no disguise to the dream. In the morning, reflecting on this nightmare of entrapment, I was disappointed with my uninventive psyche.

The next day, friends guided us to the ocean along an obscure path—a path so obscure in fact that we were not surprised, on looking down from the outermost dune, to see only four other souls on the beach. The tang of salt raised the hairs on my neck, as if out of the blue the scent of a beast had challenged me. I howled. Dizzied by air and ocean, I was halfway down the dune before I realized that the four souls, each one basking on a towel or blanket, were stark naked. Disturbed by our noisy arrival, like herons roused from their brooding grounds the sunbathers rose with gestures of indignation and pulled on their togs and scuffed away over the sand.

Now, as it happens, deep woods and mountain tops and ocean beaches always make me itch to fling off my clothes. Nature in the raw calls to nature in the raw. I usually keep this impulse—and myself—under wraps. But the itch is there. So I was sorry to have scared away these innocuous nudists. It is illegal to go naked on the Cape Cod National Seashore—just one more instance of the government's concern for our welfare—although I gather that park rangers, after gazing through binoculars to make sure of what they are seeing, warn offenders without arresting them.

Not all authorities are so indulgent. Near where I live in southern Indiana, a young woman was recently hauled into court for sunning in her back yard while wearing only the lower half of a bikini. One of her neighbors, offended by the spectacle, had called the police, who



M. Kasper

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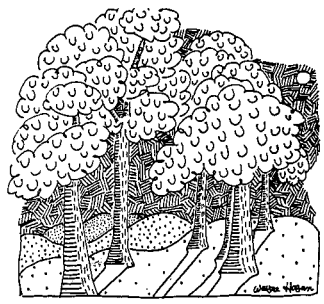
responded with even more than their usual zeal. Complaining that men had turned breasts into sexual baubles, the woman insisted upon her right to dress as she pleased in her own yard. For a month, the subject of bosoms enlivened the letters column in the local newspaper.

I thought of that embattled sunbather while these Cape Cod nudists trudged away, and I wondered if she would be locked up for having unfettered her own flesh. The case is pending. The two-year-old who lives next door to us back home in Indiana goes naked most of the summer, like a wood sprite. I see her flitting across the lawn, at perfect ease in her body, and I know there will come a day when the force of self-consciousness, if not of law, will squeeze her into clothes.

On other days, on other Cape Cod beaches, we saw acres of male and female flesh, lawfully clad in swimsuits. Many of the suits—mere scraps of cloth held in place by elastic bands—left little to the imagination, as my mother would say. This did not prevent my imagination from working, however. I remembered how the mothers I knew as a boy would speak of certain loud and brassy girls as jail bait. A skirt worn too high above the knee, a blouse unbuttoned too far below the throat, a sultry way of laughing from the belly or of toying with shoulder-length hair was enough to identify the species. What would those mothers make of this beach teeming with nearly naked loungers? Before I was old enough to feel the full gravity of girls, I puzzled over how such bait could land a boy in jail. Were males mere fish to nibble at female hooks? There came a day, of course, when my blood put an end to my puzzling, and then I would glance furtively at the dangerous hussies, fearful that a direct stare would hurl me headlong behind bars.

I had a few half-baked notions about jails. My father's father had been a prison warden in Mississippi for a spell, and he told me dark tales of that place. The inmates wore dingy overalls striped with black, as heavy as canvas, and they left their cells only to exercise and to break stone for highways. Every man's name was entered in a log book, and if he died before parole his name would be crossed through with an inky line. Riding by penitentiaries in the family car, I often saw the arms of prisoners thrust from windows, languid pale arms waving like the tentacles of undersea creatures. Along about the time I began to feel the fierce bodily tug of girls, our school took a field trip to the county jail. I suppose the visit was meant to scare us into becoming upright citizens. It scared me, if not into uprightness, then at least into lifelong wariness about the law. The jail was a gray cement hulk, housing gray steel cells, filled with gray drooping men and women and boys. Boys not much older than my classmates and I, with homely backwoods faces like ours. The place reeked of urine and sweat—barn smells I knew and did not mind—but it reeked also with a smell new to me, a stench I gradually came to identify as compounded of boredom, humiliation, and hopelessness: the stench of captivity.

During our week on the Cape I generally avoided the news, figuring the world at the end of our vacation would still be in pretty much the same sticky mess. But one morning I picked up a *Boston Globe* to find out



how the dismal Red Sox were doing. They were doing dismally. I should have quit after reading the box score. Instead, I browsed through the rest of the paper. There I sat out front of The Jail, loafing and taking my ease on a lawn chair in the sunshine, considering myself immune to the world's ills, when my lazy eye fell on an article about the population crunch in American prisons. I read it through, and felt predictably bad. A few numbers stuck in my head like cockleburs: over the past fifteen years, our inmate population has tripled, amounting now to 600,000; in the United States, one out of every thirty-five men is either in jail or skulking about under the suspicious eyes of parole officers; American blacks are imprisoned at a rate higher than anywhere else in the world, including South Africa; and during the week of our vacation, about one thousand more of our fellow citizens would be locked up. The stench of captivity rose in my nostrils.

Since my gloom threatened to obscure the family sunlight, I folded the paper away and suggested that we all go blueberrying. We drove the back roads, scanning the woods, and eventually found a good patch of bushes along the rusty iron fence of a cemetery. Long before my plastic bowl was filled, I quit picking berries and went strolling among the lichen-spangled tombstones, on the lookout for queer inscriptions. Aside from the three Sanders who were picking and the one who was snooping, the only other visitor was a man who sat in his car near the center of the graveyard, his tattooed arm crooked out the window and his radio blaring. What on earth was he listening to? At first I could make out nothing except a mumble of talk. Then as I drew near the car, I recognized the voice of a retired admiral, who was testifying before Congress about his role in the conduct of a secret war, which he and some cronies both inside and outside the government had been carrying on in various bleeding corners of the world. There was in the admiral's voice the fudgy caution of a man who knows a slip of the tongue might put him in handcuffs. Before answering questions, he consulted his attorney in whispers that sounded over the radio like the filing of fingernails. This was more ugly news I would rather not have heard, not here and now, not during the tattered remains of a vacation.

Beyond the reach of radio, the dead beneath my feet did not stir. Having them for company reminded me of stories about poor souls who had been buried alive, souls who woke up in the grave and clawed their fingers to stubs and composed notes in blood on the inside of coffin lids before expiring. When it dawned on me as a child that the bodies shut up in caskets were shut up there for good, I lost my taste for sleeping in cardboard boxes. Indeed, I lost my taste for sleeping anywhere. To shut my eyes on darkness was to bang down a lid, perhaps forever. Eventually, after months and months of terror-stricken nights, I persuaded myself to believe that sleep is not burial, that a bed is not a coffin, that return of daylight is guaranteed. It was and remains a shadowy belief, at which I dare not peer too closely, for fear of seeing right through it to a nothingness on the other side.

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We nibbled blueberries on our way back from the graveyard, saving only enough for the next morning's pancakes. I woke at five that next morning, our last on the Cape, and tiptoed outside to see what the world had to offer. A fox had been down our lane, leaving dimpled pawprints in the tawny sand. I followed the tracks as they meandered from lane to field of purple beachpeas and saltspray roses, from field to woods of oak and pine, from woods to lane and back again to field and woods. There was no hurry in this trail. The fox must have been in a contemplative mood, as I was. From a brushy hill, where cows once grazed and where tufts of rye still grew as a reminder of farms, I could see across a half mile of marsh to the bay. I walked to the shore through lavender light, past continents of reeds that waved their blond plumes higher than my head. Sand lapped over the buckled blacktop of the road. Poison ivy climbed the speed limit signs, and vines gripped the telephone poles. On dunes overlooking the beach, the outermost cottages perched on stilts, like flightless and gawky birds that would go smash in the first gale. In these reminders that we can make nothing permanent, there was a taste of freedom. Even those boxes we build for shelter and freely enter, even our clothes, even our jobs and reputations are jails of a sort. We need to escape them now and again, need to imagine them falling away from us like old skins, if we are to keep from smothering.

There was a taste of freedom also in the blueberry pancakes, a wild and tangy savor. We moved out of The Jail after breakfast and joined the Saturday morning crowd of those who had finished their holidays. Those who were just arriving thronged the opposite lane of the highway. Seeing the twin streams of cars, one flowing onto the Cape, one flowing off, I could not avoid thinking of other natural passages—the tides, the migration of alewives and sea birds, the arrival and retreat of sunlight. Doubtless this thought occurs to multitudes each year, as they are stuck in traffic jams on this skinny peninsula. A craving for escape drives us to these exposed places—to the margins of oceans and the tops of mountains—and then chains of duty drag us back home. We go and come as though caught in the inhalation and exhalation of a great breath, without knowing who or what it is that breathes. □

■

A Note on Hunting

To the Editor:

Re: *On Hunting* by Eric Zencey (June 1987)

Dear Mr. Zencey:

If the majority of hunters were like your friend, involved in the ritual and personal sacrifice, introspection, and a willingness to see the self as an animal—as the hunted would see him—I don't think there would be a lack of respect for hunters. Your friend is *far* from the norm, however; very few have examined the subject as you have.

I agree with you that the practice of hunting offers the *possibility* of a mystical communion with nature which is rare in our culture. It is precisely because it is so rare that hunting is so abhorrent. If the only way a man can get himself interested or motivated to commune with nature one week out of 52 is the prospect of killing something—this does not speak well of us. Traditional hunters and gatherers spent all their time communing with nature. Hunting was only a part of it. They knew how to respect the wilds—they were grounded and centered. To equate these traditional tribes with modern hunters is erroneous. To state that only an agricultural tribe could invent genocide and concentration camps is misleading—traditional hunters/gatherers had their share of territorial disputes. In any case, are you trying to say we should give up agriculture and go back to hunting/gathering totally? I don't know many modern hunters who would share that view.

The majority of the hunters I have met can be characterized as overweight, drinking, loud, macho men trying to prove their prowess by sitting in a box with a can of beer and shooting at a deer as it approaches a salt lick. These are men who insist they need meat at every meal—meat is synonymous with manhood. You'd be hard pressed to find a traditional tribe that ate meat at every meal—or wanted to. Unlike your friend, the *vast* majority do not hunt with bows. They are unable or unwilling to become the true warrior—the well-toned athlete who abstains from alcohol and meat and strives to achieve the clarity of mind necessary for the pure hunt. Most would rather slant the odds in their favor. Their sense of sacrifice comes in spending more money for a higher-powered gun or paying for a better-stocked hunting ground.

I don't like hunting because I don't think it's necessary to inflict that pain. We have taken too much from nature already. Every contact we have with it, it seems we rape the land and kill or drive off the animals. When will it stop? Just as you cannot ignore our ancestry, how can you choose to blatantly ignore our history? When will men take the time to learn about the nature they are so eager to dominate? It seems to me domination is the real name of the game and this is just another sorry example of it. I spend a lot of time in the woods and all I can see is more things to learn about—learning to tell directions from the stars, weather patterns, names of plants and what that tells about the land and its history, geology, wildlife and its habits. Why would you *want* to kill it? Just being there watching it, trying to become more animal-like in your habits and behavior—this all causes intense introspection. To sit so still that a deer or an elk grazes nearby—that is enough. That is enough to give you stories to tell your friends about. (Have you ever read Loren Eisley? There's a lot going on out there).

I recently watched as campers hounded two elk that entered a campsite—with cameras they stalked them, not guns, but it was just the same. That greedy ego that has to possess some photo, some pelt, some set of antlers—some materialistic proof to paste like a gold star on the forehead that says "I communed with nature—aren't I wonderful?" Everyone misses the point. Instead of going for the gold star, they should be going for the twinkle in the eye—that depth of vision that leads straight to the soul and says "yes, I saw that deer—and he's still running."

Sincerely,
Joanne Ritter
Saranac Lake, NY

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KAREN FISH

THE MIDDLE AGES

The farmers have released a herd of hogs into the stand of oak
to feed on the dropped acorns under a pile of hurried clouds.
To come back here is to forget,
the pigs move through the shower of sunlight,
making a thrush over downed leaves.
A conversation passes, like wine between men, a cackle of laughter falling—
sticks breaking and a joke that wouldn't apply, translate now.
Two dogs chase through the near-by birches, crows start
an angry possessive taunt, cries dropping
in flight, limb to branch over the dumb dogs.

A young woman walks the road.
She has a pouch of salt and several stiff fish.
She thinks of a barn as volatile,
how summer afternoons can lead heat high,
then imagines heat crowding like a procession of storm clouds
near the rafters above the stacks of bound bronze grass.

Almost home she sees the moon, an ancient classical moon,
rise big as a body of water, a body—
between the tips of trees.
The branches wag in the wind, the pale sky.
A chill comes to the woman's back like music,
moves like a finger tracing her spine, the start of something.

Night hammers into place overhead.
In bed, while she is being touched,
a ridge of beige hills surfaces, she remembers the shore.
Cows passed slowly, fell to silhouettes, purple
as if painted there.
How the waves looked tin-colored, jubilant,
and the small boats tossed about
under the brooding sunlight!

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On the Line

HOLLIS GIAMMATTEO

Pulling two specially-designed carts, staring into TV cameras, bundled against the Pacific Northwest misty spring, jostling for space among friends, talking, gesturing, and singing, On The Line, "a walk initiated by women on behalf of all peoples" (our brochure said) "for lasting peace, justice, beauty and freedom," departed. It was March 21, 1984 and we were bound for Texas. The rush of stimulation seemed rarely to lessen.

I am still in the wake of this journey, concocting truths from memory, writing a book about it. I kept a journal. It tells me I was often tired, committed but confused, happily and unhappily in love, angry, capable of humor in the bad times, of solipsism in worse times, and more than occasionally of megalomania. Sometimes it is insightful and poignant. Mostly it's a road map and tells me where I want to go, what now to decipher from the then-fresh markings. I kick myself for not recording more faithfully. Writing about a demanding situation while being involved in it was a bit like trying to pull off a calm and uncomplicated *ménage à trois*.

We were eight women ranging in age from 21 to 36. Those two carts, covered brightly with stickers and peace flags and hung with banners, carried everything. They looked not quite of this century, and a little bit like ships. In the carts: the gear and the clothes to last six months, and the films and literature that would constitute our programs, given almost every evening in almost every town along the way.

We walked along the tracks of the White (Nuclear) Train, a train carrying the warheads that arm the Trident submarines. Our goal from Bangor, Washington was the Pantex plant in Amarillo, Texas, the point of final assembly for all nuclear weapons in the U.S., and then on to Charleston, S.C. We walked in order to forge a chain of resistant towns and cities along the tracks, to speak with the officials about the railroad's attitude toward its cargo, to talk nonstop for 2,700 miles*, and to listen.

How could I think of this as anything but political? Its first steps were launched by the Ground Zero Community for Nonviolent Action. Among its first words were Gandhi, the Tracks Campaign, prayerful vigiling. I am not political. The word brings to mind improvised, shabby offices; skimpy budgets that force the stoic occupant to write letters, memos, and her grocery list on the blank sides of outdated news releases; failing equipment; virulent posters and exhausted air. Or I think of saints. Of the two, I fit neither.

For me the action was not the experience, and so I had to shape it every day. And let it shape me. As a writer, I wanted to speak eloquently for the action, imagining myself a walking fact sheet on the Train, a Barry Lopez of Burlington Northern, a faithful and tireless recorder of encounters hostile and benign, of group discussions, of group growth, spiritual and philosophic. But in fact life was too fast for me and when I came home, with a good many more memories than journal pages, all I could do to make sense of it was weave the strands of my life and understandings through the fabulous fabric of that complex journey, and designate themes and fatten them out and tell them in the spirit of the Walk, whose intent it was to move in the space of love, to transform pain and rage, personal and planetary, and to befriend paradox.

Rock River, Wyoming
June 21

I've been sent a straw hat from Seattle and it is the most important thing I own. The heat is a pressure, and the rough wind, constant. It pulls the moisture from our eyes. We've lost the awareness of it; the sound is always in our ears. There's nothing to resist it, no trees, no loose windows, and so my ear drums catch it like a baseball mitt. From morning until sleep there is the sea in my ears without brine or undulation. But at least my brains aren't, with the new hat, fried.

Every fifteen minutes we must drink. Thirst is tricky, you don't always know you have it. When a cart gets ahead, the one pulling must remember to leave a jug of water on the road for the slower walkers. It tastes like hot plastic. I'm going a little crabby, a little crazed, and want to be naked. But my shoulders can't take more sun. The layers of burn are piling up and make a Mondrian design of tan and burn lines, peel and oozing blisters. Today we walk to Bosler.

We are bent against the wind and talk, if at all, loudly. Wyoming works us over. We're the scoured rocks and blistered surfaces, tough outside, but inside chaste and wounded. We tally the dead daily—dark stains that were once ground squirrels; puddles of bone and hair melting on the asphalt—they were the antelope. "Road kills," we say, our language toughening. I note how the sun has pulled off antelope hides, stiff waves cresting over porous bone; how the smell is in our noses so we are startled only when it goes away.

We've found grim auspices among the carnage—the sun-bleached pages of pornographic magazines. Tossed from cars, evidently. Evy and I collect them. The group stops for lunch and spreads itself out over heaps of warm boulders, excessively curvaceous, not a straight line to be seen. We rest here with our ripe peaches and tuna fish and avocados. Evy and I "do" the magazines. I used to "do" biology books like this, because of my teacher, who loved freaks. She was a good teacher, could pop a concept into the third dimension—there it was, not the *idea* of

*The whole Walk, from coast to coast, required the long-termers to talk for 5,000 miles. My stint lasted six months out of the eleven.

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heart valve, but valve, crimson-slick and sputtering. She came alive with freaks; perhaps finding their dread and lonely maladies endearing, and would weave elephantitus, goiter, the stick people, harelips and hydrocephalus expertly into lectures.

Mrs. Scibo wore lurid plaids and her hair made a wedge out from her narrow chin, and she was convincing and good-humored. I became a freak fanatic, too. And with my allowance I bought Ville Walker Smith, a much-advanced zoology text which had super photographs of freaks. I'd page through it for hours like an opera buff through old libretti or annuals of ancient performances, looking for my heart underneath the hyperbolic fanfare, my soul beneath the twisted joints or leprous skin. So I page through these pornographic magazines asking, "Where is my connection?"

I keep thinking that I'll understand it if I look at it enough. But the others are quickly disgusted and drop away, settling deeper into the warm rocks with tins or oily sandwiches balanced on raised knees. They want to keep some beauty of the day about us.

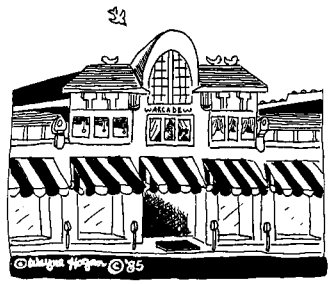
I study *Chic* and *Club*. We have a *Penthouse* in the cart, yesterday's find. "Evy," I say, "it's just pages and pages of the same stuff. Mostly degradation. Is this what I'm missing in my adult life?"

Evy squeals. Her crisp white shirt and red feedstore cap signal a wholesome phase, a mid-West kid browsing in the mercantile for ice cream and soda. Some days she is Bob Dylan and some days she's an old man with pilfered, ratty clothes and a lusterless complexion, and some days she's a New York model. I do not understand where there is room for all these people, and there are more. Today's kid squeals over the pictures. I wish she could be the old man or Bob Dylan, though. We could use the experience and explication.

"I don't know, Hollis, I sincerely don't," she says, aghast. "But I think we have to understand what goes on here, because we *are* these women."

Earnestly we turn the pages to find out. Do I believe we are? Would I do this stuff? I have, sort of—that's not the point, I am not shockable like that. Other ways. I hate the cock's dominion. Genitals, in these mags, seem personified. Dress them up in tiny outfits, top hat and cane, breakaway panties, it could be a musical. Cunts held open, the lips pristinely moistened, endlessly readied for cock, as if he, or it, is the special guest in whose honor this banquet is prepared. All these appetizing meats he moves among, tasting, testing. So, the women upend themselves, vending their parts and smiling smiles that have disconnected. What I do not get is how this disconnection passes for sex. Do they hate us so?

We're old hands at the disconnection game. We've toured nuclear dumps, energy labs and reservations, and have been talked at by men with spiels and ready answers about radioactive wastes, and "clean" energy, and "high tech" storage, consisting, really, of plastic-lined metal barrels and deep holes in basalt. There is a gap between the language of optimism and corroding containers, the contaminated aquifers. There's a lot of smiling on these tours. These talking, smiling men belong to the company, like the buses and the safety helmets, the brochures and the bright, attractive models that illustrate such concepts as the Deep Hole. The tour guides' mouths are tape loops with the segments on



Three Mile Island, breeder reactors, weapons-grade plutonium erased. Do they hate truth so, not because they are immoral but because it is complex?

Why do we carry on with our rage and stringencies? We should dance in the streets in the time we have left us, but no. I walk because it's an easy way to integrate my thoughts and feelings. I'm releasing pressure is all, an act requiring neither capital, five-year plans, advanced degrees. Hope for the future, maybe. But we don't use that word much anymore. We think it's wimpy. "Hope reclines on a lawn chair and whines about the weather." We say this. I don't know—maybe it's splitting hairs. We like our words more muscular, like them to size things up, or at least to light the path between private darkness and collective night.

*

This morning I was kissed awake. I had been curled alone on a narrow bed in a damp, barracks-like apartment. The others had stayed in the larger one up front. Both were the gifts of a man from Laramie who had passed us on our way to Hanna, and stopped and greeted us as if he'd been waiting for weeks. Which he had. So in Rock River we stay in Leon's rentals.

All night I tried to write a poem. I crouched over a low table rolling cigarettes and drinking beer between labored phrases. I was trying to say how the porn was all tied up with issues of entitlement and the dead animals, and pleasure disconnected from feeling, and I was warming to it, flexing my metaphors and getting potted.

"We sit on a hot rock eating lunch," I wrote. "Klaus Barbie appears in *Penthouse* along with a prominent feminist or two, a homogeneity of ramrod, custom-cunted fantasies and cosmetically corrected beavers which remind me of the undertaker's art, such application of blush, glisten, curl. It sets impossibly high standards, at the very least. . . .

"I am outraged," I wrote, getting it off my chest, but going no deeper. Am I? Theoretically, perhaps. In the best of all possible worlds, men would not make lethal weapons resembling the penis. In the best of all possible worlds, all life would be respected, not destroyed. But what we've got is what we've got, and what we have to work with.

I was bought once. For a lark, I thought, always drawn down-deep to sleaze, stuck in the tired notion that to be deeply felt, life must be sad. I answered an ad, "Studio Model Wanted," and made my way down Lombard Street toward a line of dark shops behind scaffolding and construction. I went upstairs. Few questions asked—"Had I? What would I . . . ?" I was shown a room, told to strip, and wait.

The deal was that guys came, asked you to pose, and took pictures. The establishment provided Polaroids and sold film at outrageous prices. The studio I got had glass from a broken floodlight all over the floor. I thought that was amazing, that nobody cared enough about the models or the place to clean it up. I stripped and waited.

A young man came in. He could

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have been my student, for I'd recently had some, recently had dropped out of an English Ph.D. program. I ran through that fantasy, negotiating a hard turn out of bad grammar and advice to young poets, toward prosaic, unprepped beavers. He was not my student, although something remained of that impression. Embarrassment came off him. That made me want to help him with his grammar, his film, the execution of his purpose even more. So we faced off in silence. I smiled. He didn't.

"Uh, sit down," he said.

I did, pointing out the glass. "I'm not sure what you want me to do," I said, "but I won't roll around in glass."

No response. He reminded me of a kid who goes up to The Fat Lady on a dare, to put a kiss upon her breast, while his buddies hold bursting cheeks and his warm Pepsi outside the tent. It's a lonely ordeal inside, and the pleasure's only after. He seemed like that.

"Hello," I said. "What's your name?" I was winging it. It seemed a place to start.

"I want you to spread your legs," he said.

"What?" Wasn't it too soon? Weren't there preliminaries? Names exchanged, civility, fake, albeit figurative, tea?

"Just do it."

"O.K. Sure." And *still* the urge to entertain, to be a hostess, to establish some connection even as I opened my legs for the grainy, dead eye of the Polaroid. This was erotic? Spread legs on a stained ochre rug, one floodlight intact, beaming down harsh light, the other in tinsel pieces around my bottom; the thin, warped sheets of paneling, dirt and grime, a young man there either on a dare or in some need I couldn't, in my female soul, fathom?

"More."

To soften the degradation, I began to hum. It was the kindest thing around me, the little off-key tune. I thought he might tell me to shut up, but then I'd tell him to. I hadn't relinquished control consciously, you see. I realized I was losing touch, though. I was humming so I wouldn't have to be there. I stopped.

"What do you want?" I said. "At least tell me. I'm not an animal, you know."

"Yeah, yeah, O.K. What you're

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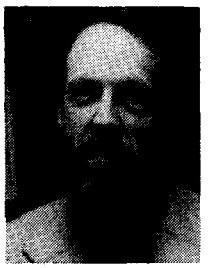

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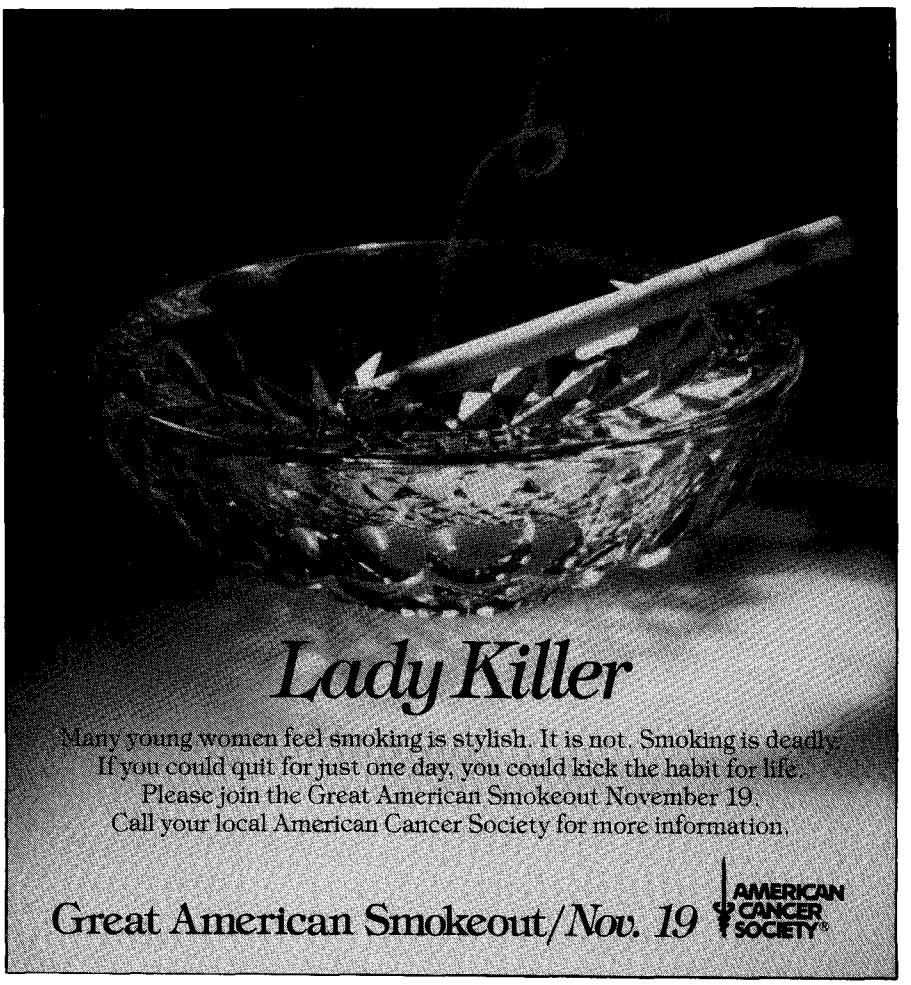
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doing's good. I just want one more picture."

"You don't seem to be enjoying this."

"I need it. I'm going away for a long time, and there won't be nothing. No women. Nothing. I need to buy more film." He hurried out.

Were the other "girls" concerned also for the happiness of their clients, or had they managed to dispense with the habit of cordial exchange, and get down to pose-hum-click? A sign said that tipping was encouraged. I couldn't imagine how to do that.

He came back. I chatted away, couldn't dissociate from the rest of me the one thing that he wanted. He grunted and took a few more pictures and paid me with less civility than had I filled his gas tank.

"Have a good trip," I said, numb with my exertions. I had not gotten through! I was still back, I realized, in teacher-mind, running on the assumption that communication is in itself both ends and means.

I dressed and went out to the hall which was the office because a desk was there, with the telephone and cameras. There were three of us. The man had stepped out for a while, and so Norma was in charge.

"How was it?" she asked.

"O.K.," I said, pretending I had a basis for comparison. "He was in a hurry, though."

"Time is money, you know?"

"Yeah," I answered.

We glazed over, waiting for whatever else the night would bring.

"It's Tuesday," Norma said. "But we could get lucky."

We did. No one else came. And then I left with no thought of returning. It was the enormity of the dissociation that got to me, how Norma and Esther and I didn't connect, but inflicted our numbness on one another. Gum-cracking, chain-smoking, glassy-eyed women, we had as little connection to one another and ourselves as our clients had with us. It was the bleakest cycle.

But I did not put all this in my poem, feeling that the poem, somehow, ought to be a vessel for my rage, and I hadn't any. I realized that in all of this, I am only sad.

She comes in smelling of lavender and hillside. She'd been up since five, she said, and had been walking with her sketch pad. See? And she opens to a picture of log, stream, leaf, tissue thin and veiny. I say come in with me. And she does, a little, only the bed is narrow and the bag so tight that she slides the table over and falls in segments over both. I get her thigh, though. "Good morning."

"What a smile," I say. She is beautiful this morning, her hair so blonde, in places it looks silver, shimmering like metallic threads in dense fabric. And I want to make her cool blue eyes roll back, go soft with pleasure.

We kiss again, blonde, brunette; Swede, Italian; woman, woman. What nudged us from hello to passion? She is so blonde, is that it? I know her inside and out, have almost come to say, upon occasion, "Ah, love, I have never, ever . . ." or "You are my one true love," and worse, have almost believed it. I've let the hackneyed, self-pitying, Pavlovian hit tunes wriggle through the guards between my ears and work in my blood like awful chemicals. A delirium comes over me still when this kind of music plays. I trade in all my growth and hard-won clarity for the fever of pressed bodies and a swoon in a pair of strong arms. Worse, I listen for them, these songs whose plaints and sorrows never change, and I long to play the heart's bingo where in one's line of vision is only lovely lust and sparkling reciprocities. Didn't Plato liken love like this to flu?

"What terrible conditioning am I in?" I wondered, stroking my handsome, lovely blonde. It is hard enough having a good solid relationship with one of your own sex without all this. But she could have been a model in one of those magazines. I mean, not really, but the way I was attracted to her, maybe. Tall, aristocratic, sometimes boyish, and often with a kind of heartbreakingly elegant profile, enhanced by the sun making rainbows on her gold eyelashes, so I must catch my breath and call her, bear with me, cornily, Botticelli. She is my centerfold.

But what seemed healthy in the pre-porn days of appetite and exploration now feels awkward, sullied by the images of spread cunts, blondes with their tongues lolling distractedly, photo-stories of women making it with women—in the desert; on motorcycles; in hotel rooms with Laura Ashley bedspreads, in bucolic contrast to the s&m motif.

Once she said to me, "I want to see you in your white shirt with the collar up, unbuttoned to the navel, and tucked into tight jeans." Or I said it to her. It doesn't matter. I wanted to dress her up in pleasing fantasies—the innocent; the inaccessible; the androgyne—and then undress her. I wanted the undressing to be like church, like a mass with the solemn and dramatic gestures of sacrifice and offering. But it never was. M. A. was always so eager, bless her, and I was so neat. On her side of the bed, flung clothes, the casualities of passion, while on mine, a tidy pile.

The magazines are the transgression that turned us out of Eden. Our encounters with the stuff make us hesitate to touch, make the pictures come to mind when we kiss and fondle. Momentarily we are unsexed, in the bind of being both the subject matter and the lovers of women. Who am I in relation to my sexuality? Do I have any, that is, independent of these sad tyrannies? If not, how does one begin again?

And it was here we started to take our Walk seriously as a feminist act. Not that we felt suddenly more vulnerable or endangered, only greatly pained to be a part of the catalogue of violations: against women, animals, the earth. Everything, it seemed, fell into this perspective.

It is complex. I remembered my Lombard Studio degradation not for the exposure of my parts, but for my coming unconnected. People do damage when they disconnect. They go haywire in Oklahoma post offices and mow down their co-workers; they become serial killers; they make ovens and gas chambers and call them The Final Solution; they make hazardous waste as if it is the natural silk issuing from the spider's belly; they take drugs and alcohol, trying to reconnect; they take their lives when it doesn't work; they do damage but call it other things, like honorable war, adult entertainment, or clean, cheap energy.

We kiss again, half in, half out of the sleeping bag, half on, half off the table. We are restored to our vitality, our hunger, although, God knows, a morning after cigarettes, beer and a failed poem in this damp cell contains few romantic elements. But my images are on again, shoving the porn back under—images of sweet smiles and Botticelli, of greedy hands, of how she took a scissors once to all her fingernails while leaning in a doorway, a gesture brazen, priestly, domineering, and then, turning, said, "Now?" □

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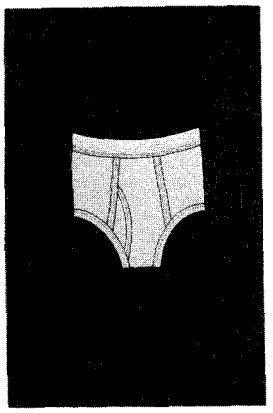

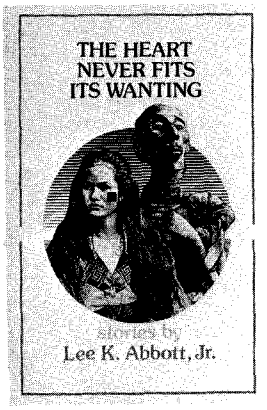

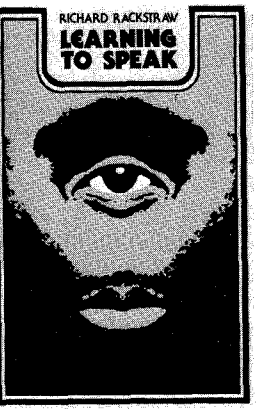

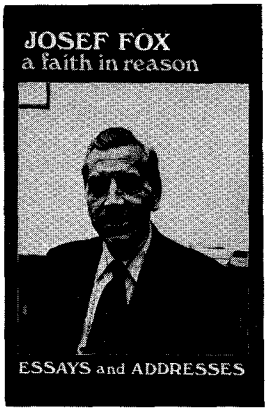

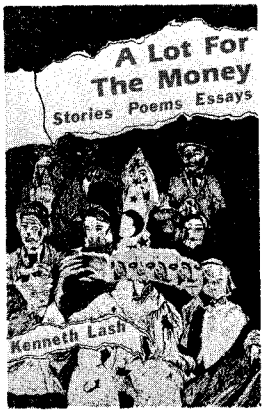

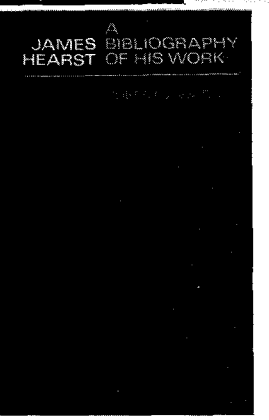

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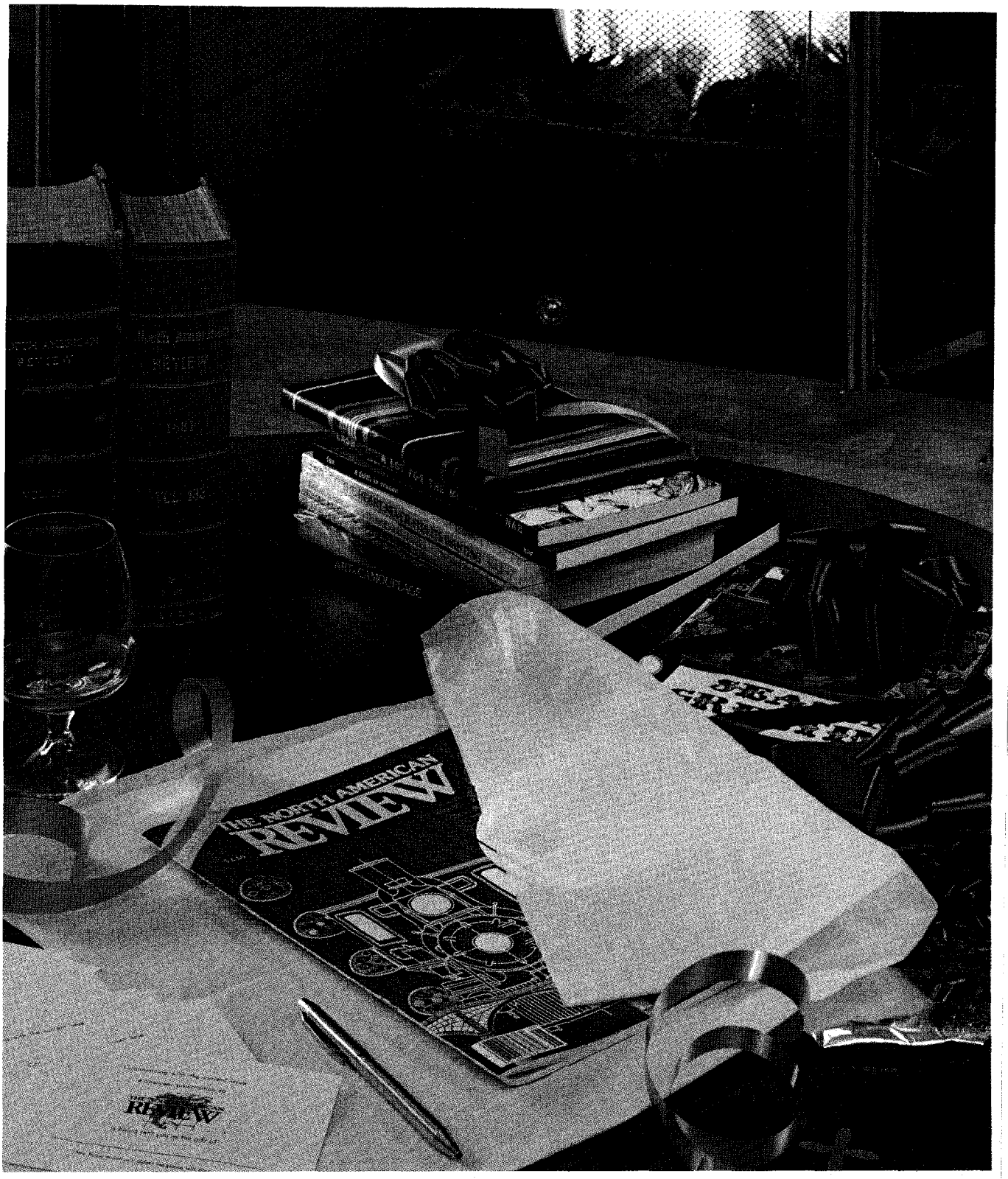

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